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DETECTIVE STORIES

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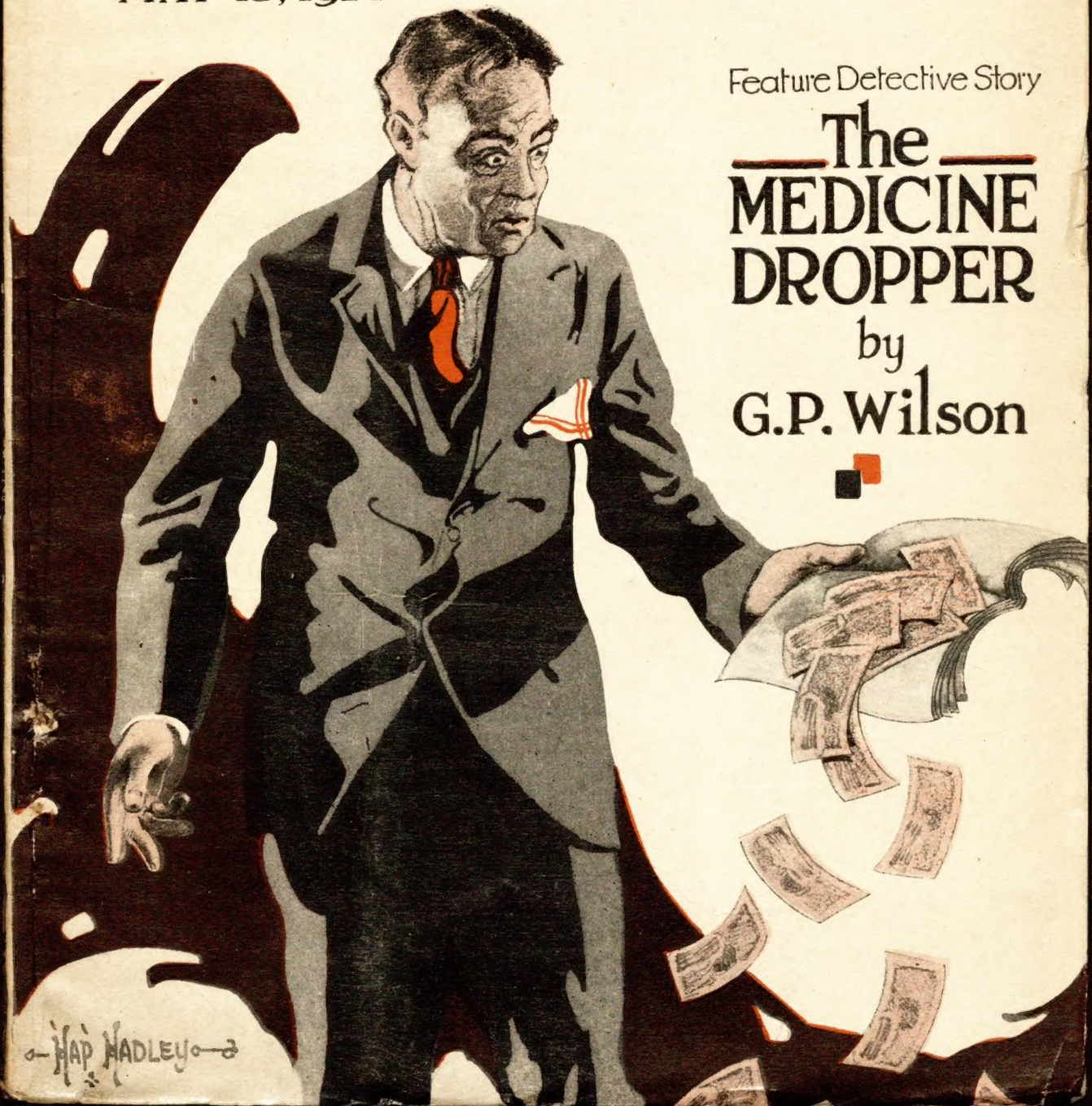

Feature Detective Story

The MEDICINE DROPPER

by

G.P. Wilson

Mystery Magazine

Vol. VI MAY 15, 1924 No. 156

ISSUED TWICE A MONTH

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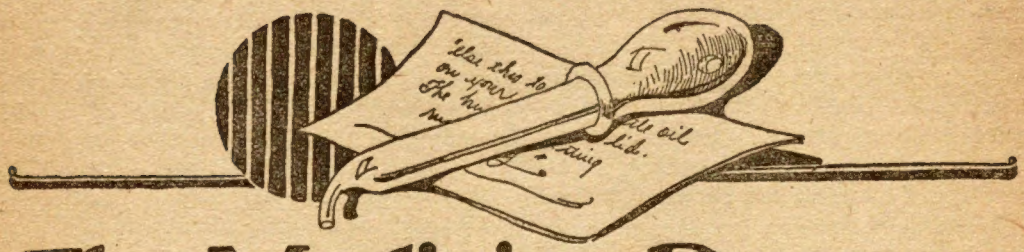

The Medicine Dropper

by

E. P. Wilson

CHAPTER ONE

IT was about ten o'clock on the night Doctor Judd died that I met the girl in this case. I had been playing billiards, and on the way home was standing on the corner of Seventh and Olive streets waiting for a west-bound car when I first saw her.

In this age of feminine equality one sees so many girls alone at night that they do not attract even passing attention. I didn't notice this one particularly until, after passing me, she turned and walked toward me again. She wasn't phenomenally beautiful, just the average correctly dressed young lady.

As she was about to pass the second time, she hesitated a moment and, looking me squarely in the eyes, winked.

I stood there like an idiot and stared.

Her next action was more of a surprise than her winking at me. She thrust a small, oblong package into my hand and then walked rapidly around the corner. I waited a moment, recovering from my surprise, and then ran after her. As I turned the corner she was entering a limousine halfway down the block, and was driven out of sight before I could get close enough to read the license number of the car.

Isn't it easy to think of things one might have done, when placed in a peculiar predicament, after it is all over? I realized that I should have spoken to the girl, detained her forcibly if necessary, or at least have tried to get an explanation of her strange behavior. But I hadn't, so there was no use thinking any more about that. I had lost her completely, but I still had the package she had given me, and I hoped that it might give me some clue as to her identity. No matter what her object had been, I was determined to meet her and find out.

I believe that, had I encouraged myself a trifle, I would have fallen in love with her. Mystery has always appealed to me, and the strange actions of this young lady may in a measure explain my feelings toward her.

I did not open the package until I reached home, and then was disappointed. It contained only a common, ordinary medicine dropper, one that had evidently been used, and a card upon which was written, in feminine script:

"Use this to drop a little oil on your eyelid. The hinge is getting rusty."

I concluded that it was merely a practical joke. Later I wished fervently that I could believe this was true.

CHAPTER TWO

I HAD made arrangements to play golf the next morning with my chum, Jimmy Clayborn. He was to call for me at eight o'clock and we were going to the links in his car.

We play together during the morning hours because Jimmy works on a newspaper and has to report every day at noon.

"I'll have to stop on the way out," Jimmy said as I climbed into his car. "They telephoned me from my paper that a Doctor Judd—he was a rich old geezer, I think—died last night, and they want me to get a notice. It won't take long."

The Judd residence was in Portland Place, a magnificent structure of severe architecture, imposing, but of a rather sombre appearance from the outside.

As we drove up, two policemen were standing on either side of the door talking to a young man who evidently had just arrived.

"That's Jackson, our star reporter," declared Jimmy. "Something startling must have developed since they talked to me."

"Murder?" I questioned.

"Something of that sort, or Jackson wouldn't be here. He gets all the sensational assignments."

"I believe I'll go in with you," I said.

"All right," Jimmy agreed. "We can both use my press card."

Fictional crime has always been a hobby of mine. I have pursued it from the five-cent weeklies to the scientific research of recent writers, and anything with a semblance of mystery has always found its way into my library. Naturally I wanted to see a real mystery solved by real people, and it was the anticipation of this that prompted me to follow Jimmy into the house.

We had no trouble gaining an entrance. The policemen looked at Jimmy's card and supposing that I, too, belonged to the press, admitted us both.

The front door of the Judd house opened into a large reception hall, the back of which is a big plate-glass mirror. A huge stairway leads from one side of the room to the second floor, and the section of wall just in front of it is also covered by a looking-glass. As you enter the reflection from one glass to the other gives one a clear view of the stairway as far as the front landing.

As we entered Jimmy turned at once toward a group of men congregated before a door leading into another room. I was about to follow him when I glanced at the mirror, and saw the reflection of a girl standing on the stairway.

Our eyes met in the mirror, and hers widened in terror. Her body swayed a moment as though she were going to faint, and then, emitting a low moan of terror, scarcely audible where I stood, she turned and ran up the stairs. It was the girl who had given me the medicine dropper.

Naturally her presence startled me. It was plainly evident that Doctor Judd's death was out of the ordinary, and I could not help but wonder if the girl had anything to do with it. I did not believe that she had, but why, when she recognized me, had her face shown so clearly the terror she felt? I tried to believe that my presence had startled her and caused the expression of fear, but I could not become reconciled to that theory.

I had started across the room to hunt up Jimmy, thinking he might throw some light on the subject, when some one laid a hand on my shoulder.

"Do you know the young lady?" asked a pleasant voice.

I turned, a little startled, and saw that a small, red-headed man had detained me. His appearance was not very prepossessing. He was short of stature, his features were not symmetrical, and he wore a wrinkled suit of clothes that did not fit with any degree of exactness. But there was a frank, humorous expression on his homely face and a firmness around his mouth and chin that caused me to like him at once.

"No," I answered truthfully. "Do you?"

"She's Doctor Judd's niece," he replied. "His principal heir."

"What paper are you connected with?" I asked, thinking he was a reporter.

"I am a detective from Headquarters," he answered, without any evidence of arrogance. "My name is Dugan.' '

"Glad to meet you, Mr. Dugan," I declared. "I am Quincy Henderson. I just arrived a moment ago. Can you tell me whether or not Doctor Judd was murdered?"

"The doctors think that possibly he was," he answered slowly, eyeing me a trifle curiously. "But they are not sure. They think that some one might have dropped hydrocyanic acid in his eye."

"What is hydrocyanic acid?" I answered, trying to appear unconcerned.

"It's a poison which acts instantaneously," he explained. "It's rather hard to obtain by any one not connected with the drug business. Are you a friend of the family?"

"No," I answered. "Why?"

"I was just wondering. I know you are not on any of the papers. Doing a little amateur detective work, I suppose?"

I shook my head and smiled.

"I'm not one of those pests," I assured him. Then I explained how I happened to be there.

"I'm glad," he said sincerely. "I haven't much patience with egotistical crime chasers who should be attending to their own business. Not because I believe the detective business requires an unusual amount of brains," he continued. "Horse sense and luck—a lot of luck—make a good detective. Do you mind telling me why the young lady was so frightened when she saw you?"

"I'd rather not," I stammered, flushing guiltily. "I'll be frank with you, Mr. Dugan. It may have something to do with Doctor Judd's death, but I hardly think so."

"Very well," he asserted cheerfully. "If you don't want to compromise the young lady it's all right with me. We'll find out anyway. It is disagreeable to drag a woman into a mess like this, but sometimes it has to be done. If you found out that Miss Judd was implicated, what would you do?"

"Help her get away," I assured him without a moment's hesitation.

"You think you would," he smiled, "but your conscience would not let you. If you find out anything you'll have to tell some one, and I will appreciate your telling me first. I'm not ashamed to admit that I need all the help I can get."

"I'll tell you if I tell any one," I promised. "I've probably misled you into believing that I know something important. It probably doesn't amount to anything."

He thanked me, and as he had made all the examinations he cared to, and had nothing to do until the coroner's inquest, he gave me a general perspective of Doctor Judd's death.

He was a retired physician, very wealthy, and lived in the big house with a Mr. Murphy, a man of his own age, who had been a chum of his for a long time. Neither of them had married, and both spent most of their time in study—Mr. Murphy reading law and Doctor Judd medicine. They had both gained quite a reputation as men of learning in their respective lines.

Doctor Judd had acquired the habit of reading most of the night, and not rising until late in the morning. His eyes were not very strong, and he frequently used an eye wash to stimulate them. He kept this and a medicine dropper close at hand all the time. Any one who happened to be around dropped the medicine into his eyes for him.

When the butler came downstairs that morning he noticed a light burning in the library, but thought nothing of it, as Doctor Judd frequently forgot to turn it out when he retired. When he went in to extinguish it he found Doctor Judd dead.

He aroused the household and called Doctor Stevenson, who lived just across the street. The physician, after a hurried examination of the body, diagnosed the case as heart failure. But Mr. Murphy, because of the faint odor of peach kernels, which was easily detected close to the body, thought that the doctor had been murdered. At the time Doctor Judd had been deeply engrossed in the study of poisons, and naturally had talked to Mr. Murphy about their effects. He knew the peculiar odor of hydrocyanic acid, and what a dangerous poison it was.

Doctor Stevenson did not think much of their theory. He knew that Doctor Judd had had a severe case of heart trouble for a number of years, and was satisfied that this had caused his death. But he exam-

ined the body again very carefully, and found a small white spot on the retina of one eye. This might or might not have been caused by a drop of the poison. Doctor Stevenson thought not. But there was a small bottle of the poison, tightly corked, on the table by the side of the bottle of eye water used regularly by Doctor Judd. And the medicine dropper, which was invariably on hand, was missing. In view of these facts the two gentlemen thought it advisable to notify the police.

"It's beyond me," admitted Dugan, as he finished telling me this. "There seems to be no motive for committing the crime. You see, I am assuming that it really was murder. Miss Judd is lavishly remembered in the Doctor's will, but she has everything now that any one could wish for."

"Surely you don't suspect her of actually committing the murder," I remonstrated.

"Crime is a peculiar thing," he asserted. "The more we deal with it, the more cynical we become. The law holds every one innocent until proven guilty. In searching for criminals we reverse that ruling."

He was quiet for a time, and I knew from what he said later that he was weighing me in the balance.

"Henderson, I like you," he continued. "As a rule I don't babble everything I know. In fact, I have the reputation for being about as communicative as an oak tree. But I'm going to tell you what I know about this case."

"I'll consider anything you say as confidential," I assured him. "And I'll do anything I can to help you."

"Thanks," he said. "Motive usually figures prominently in a murder case, but I haven't been able to locate one here. Two of the servants—the butler and the cook—are, Mr. Murphy tells me, remembered in Doctor Judd's will, but not sufficiently to prompt murder. Both have been with the family for years, and Mr. Murphy is confident that neither would harbor even a thought of such a thing. The chauffeur and Miss Judd's maid would not be benefited by his death, so that practically eliminates them.

"How about Mr. Murphy?" I asked.

"No motive there," he declared. "He has lots of money of his own and has always been on the best of terms with the Doctor. And, besides, if he had anything to do with it, why didn't he let Doctor Stevenson's diagnosis of apoplexy stand?"

"Isn't there any clue at all?"

"The only things I've found are some footprints made in the soft ground around the library window."

"I've read of people being identified by footprints," I stated. "You could measure them and find out if any one around the house made them."

"I did," he said, smiling whimsically. "They were made by a woman, and Miss Judd's shoe fits them like a glove."

I felt myself slipping again. Why anything connecting this young lady with the murder should so upset me I could not understand. A peculiar meeting such as ours had been, and what followed, would of course leave an impression upon any one. But it should not cause as much anxiety as I felt. It was as if she belonged to my own family. An overwhelming desire to go to her, comfort her, and offer her my assistance, came over me. But I realized that it was none of my affair. I was a rank outsider, and there was no excuse whatever for my intruding on what was strictly a private matter.

"It is a rather peculiar case," continued Dugan. "Possibly the coroner's inquest will throw some light upon it."

"She didn't do it," I declared vehemently.

"No one said she did," smiled Dugan. "But you'll have to admit that the only evidence we have points that way."

"I don't see that it does. Hundreds of women wear the same size shoe. I really think those footprints are in her favor. If she had wanted to murder Doctor Judd she wouldn't have been sneaking around outside the house. She could have accomplished the deed without going to that trouble."

"True," he admitted, "but when people are worked up to a high enough pitch to commit murder they do some queer things.

"Don't misunderstand me. I don't believe that Miss Judd actually committed the

murder, but it is my business to weigh everything in the balance and make the best deductions I can."

He stopped talking abruptly, and then said in a low voice: "That's Miss Judd's maid coming down the stairway now."

She came to the foot of the stairs, hesitated a moment, and then walked directly to us and addressed me:

"Miss Judd would like to speak to you," she said. "Do you mind coming upstairs?"

"Not at all," I answered, and followed her, wondering what the outcome of our interview would be.

CHAPTER THREE

AS I reached the top of the stairway I saw Miss Judd standing in the hall talking earnestly to the butler. She was just handing him an envelope, and when she saw me she assumed an air of indifference which was forced and unnatural. It was plainly evident that she was not pleased with my having seen her. The butler moved away immediately.

"I'm Mr. Henderson," I said, advancing to where she stood.

"I—I—hardly know what to say to you," she faltered. "Come into the sitting-room. We will not be disturbed there."

We entered a bright, cheerful room—a gratifying contrast to the sombre hall below. Miss Judd seated herself beside a table and began to finger, nervously, the magazines which covered it.

"I don't know what you think of me," she began, steadily meeting my gaze. "I did a very foolish thing last night, and if you can, I wish you would not mention it in your paper."

As I was not a friend of the family, she had naturally taken me for a newspaper man.

"I have already forgotten that," I assured her. "I'll never think of it again."

"You couldn't forget it," she said, her eyes filled with tears. "Uncle John's death, the medicine dropper, it all—points to me as—as the——"

She did not finish the sentence, but, sobbing violently, buried her head in her arms.

A woman's tears always fill me with a desire to do anything possible to stop them. I forgot that we were practically strangers. I thought of her only as a girl pitifully alone, facing a great trial under conditions the strongest of wills would cringe from.

Impulsively I went to her and put my arm around her, uttering incoherent words of sympathy. She nestled closer to me, as a distressed child clings to its parent, not realizing that I was a man and a stranger. She thought of me only as some one who was sympathizing with her—making her burden a trifle lighter by sharing it with her. Personality was entirely obliterated by her great sorrow.

Her sobbing gradually grew less violent and then, realizing suddenly that she had been crying on a stranger's coat, she straightened up, flushing vividly. I withdrew my arm and stood looking down at her, wondering how she would take my unwarranted familiarity.

"Thanks," she said simply. "I feel better now. I'm not myself to-day."

"I understand," I smiled. "You need some one to talk to, some one to sympathize with you, and I hope you will take me. I'm not connected with a newspaper, I'm simply an intruder who came here by chance."

Then I explained how I happened to be in the house.

"I'm glad," she declared, when I had finished. "I have no friends here. I've been away at school the most of my life, and the neighbors—well, I suppose you have noticed that none of them have been in.

"It is probably my uncle's fault. He led a very secluded life; never encouraged friendship with any one except Mr. Murphy, and people came to look upon us as a queer lot. Do they suspect me of—of——"

"They suspect every one," I interrupted. "You will probably have to testify at the coroner's inquest, but you must not worry about that."

"How can I help being worried?" she sighed. "I don't really know anything about it, but—— Do I have to tell what I think?"

"Not necessarily," I assured her. "But

you must tell everything that might throw some light on your uncle's death."

"I will not," she declared vehemently, her expression of grief changing suddenly to one of stern defiance. "They cannot make me, and I will not." Then, as suddenly, her mood changed again.

"Don't let them try," she pleaded. "You do not understand; I don't myself. But I cannot—tell what I think."

"Don't you believe that if you told me everything I might help you?"

"No one can now," she said, in a hopeless voice. "I'm going to do what I think is right. I will be censured, perhaps, but I do not care if I am."

"Whatever happens," I declared earnestly, "I want you to consider me as your friend, ready to do anything I can for you."

"You are very kind, Mr. Henderson. For some reason you do not seem like a stranger to me." She smiled whimsically. "If some one had seen me crying on your shoulder they would hardly have taken us for strangers, would they?"

Before I could reply Dugan rushed into the room, short of breath, as though he had been running. "Pardon me, Miss Judd," he wheezed. "Have you seen Martin, the butler?"

"He was here when Mr. Henderson came upstairs," she answered. "Why?"

"He's gone," explained Dugan. "Being an important witness, I wanted to be sure he would be present at the inquest."

I was watching Miss Judd, and could not help noticing how relieved she appeared when she learned that Martin was missing.

"He went to mail a letter for me," she said. "He will probably be back in a few minutes."

"M'm," mused Dugan. "I hardly think he'll be back."

"I hope not," declared Miss Judd impulsively.

"Why don't you tell me all you know about this affair, Miss Judd?" Dugan asked. "It might help us to find the murderer of your uncle."

"I have told you all I know about it," she replied in a determined voice. "Please do not ask me any more questions."

"We had better go downstairs," I interposed. "Miss Judd has been through a great deal and should get some rest if she can."

Dugan turned away abruptly and I followed him from the room. As we went out of the door I turned and my eyes met the girl's. She smiled her appreciation. As we were going down the stairway Dugan turned to me and asked:

"What do you think of Miss Judd since you've talked to her?"

"I'm more thoroughly convinced than ever that she is innocent," I declared.

"I suppose she is," he said in a doubtful tone. "She doesn't seem like a girl who would do anything like that."

He was silent until we reached the foot of the stairway, his brow puckered in thought. "I don't believe she's guilty," he finally continued. "But I think she knows who is."

CHAPTER FOUR

DUGAN went into the library to interview the coroner, who had arrived while we were upstairs, and I began to look around for my reporter friend Jimmy. I found him seated in a secluded corner of the reception hall, looking like I feel when I have the sick headache.

"I've been sick," he sighed. "I went in there (he waved his hand toward the library) and I can't stand that sort of thing. Where the deuce have you been?"

"Upstairs talking to Miss Judd," I stated, a trifle arrogantly.

"To Miss Judd!" he said in a surprised voice. "Why, some of them think she killed the old man."

"They don't know what they are talking about," I retorted with some heat. "She isn't the kind of girl who would do a thing like that."

"I hope not. I don't like to see a woman mixed up in a murder case. Maybe they'll drop her out of it. The butler taking French leave has caused suspicion to swing over to him."

"Look here," I said sternly. "You're not

going to intimate that Miss Judd had anything to do with this when you write it up for your paper, are you?"

"No," he answered dolefully. "Nor any one else, for that matter. When the boss thought it was nothing but a death notice, he sent me here, but as soon as something startling developed, up popped Jackson to cover the case. I'm about as important a factor on the *Transcript* as the office boy," he added bitterly. "Almost, but not quite."

"You at least won't have to write it up."

"That's true," he admitted, assuming a more cheerful air. "Are you ready to go now?"

"I'm going to stay for the inquest," I said. "They'll be ready in a few moments, I suppose. Do you know where they are going to hold it?"

"In the library. The body was moved after the coroner made an examination. What do you want to stick around here for?"

"Dugan, the detective on the job, is a friend of mine," I answered. "I'm going to stay with him. If I hear anything that will interest your paper I'll telephone you and you can get it in ahead of Jackson."

"I appreciate your desire to help me out," he declared, "but there's no chance of your finding out anything before Jackson does. No one ever gets ahead of him."

He arose and walked toward the door, his knees a little wobbly from the nausea he had experienced. Jimmy had hardly gone when Dugan came out of the library and beckoned to me.

"We are going to hold the inquest in here," he said. "Guess you want to be present, don't you?"

"Yes," I answered. "I've never seen a coroner in action."

"It's a pity you can't see a good one. Davis is a bulldozer, with about as much sense as a saloon bum. He just left a case and brought the jury he had there with him. We are going to exclude all newspaper men, so you are with me, understand, from Headquarters."

When we entered the library it was nearly filled. Davis, the coroner, sat at one end of a big library table. On his left the jury sat in two rows of chairs, and on his right, close to the table, was an empty chair for witnesses to use while being examined. The rest of us sat a short distance from the table, directly in front of the coroner.

Miss Judd was between her maid and Mr. Murphy. She seemed to be calm and without emotion, but I knew this was only a thin veneer, hiding her real agitation.

Doctor Stevenson, the first to take the stand, stated that he had been called early that morning to the Judd residence, and had found Doctor Judd quite dead. At first he had diagnosed the case as heart failure, and was still inclined to believe that it had caused Doctor Judd's death.

"Did you find any trace of any poison having been used?"

"I found a small white spot upon one of the deceased's eyes. I cannot say whether it was caused by hydrocyanic acid or not."

"Then why did you advance the theory that this had caused his death?"

"I didn't. There was an odor of peach seed kernels, which is not common. Whenever a physician detects it in connection with sudden death, his mind instantly reverts to hydrocyanic acid. It is one of the most deadly poisons known. There was a bottle of the acid on the table, which accounts for the odor. I did not think it had been used, but it could have been, so Mr. Murphy and I thought it best to notify the police."

"I understand that Doctor Judd frequently had medicine dropped into his eye by any one who happened to be handy. If some one familiar with this had substituted hydrocyanic acid for the eye wash, would it have caused death?"

"I believe that it would. The fact that a drop of it in the eye would be fatal has never been established, but our highest authorities claim that it would."

"Then you think there is a possibility of the deceased having been murdered that way?"

"I do not believe that he was murdered. He has been troubled with a weak heart for a number of years. He consulted me about it on numerous occasions. I still believe heart failure caused his death."

"How long had Doctor Judd been dead

when you examined the body?" asked Davis, changing his line of inquiry.

"For some time. I could not tell, even approximately, how long."

"After midnight, do you think?"

"Possibly. Maybe before. I only know that he had been dead a number of hours when I was called in."

The Coroner excused Doctor Stevenson and called Mr. Murphy. His testimony did not throw any light upon the subject. He had spent the evening, as usual, with Doctor Judd. He had retired at nine o'clock as was his invariable custom, and did not know of Doctor Judd's death until he was awakened by the butler the next morning. He told his story in a straightforward, simple manner, which left no doubt as to its correctness.

"Were you Doctor Judd's attorney?" asked Davis.

"Yes, sir."

"Did he ever draw up a will?"

"He did about ten years ago."

"To whom did he leave his property?"

"The bulk of his fortune was left to Miss Judd. The servants were well remembered, especially Martin, the butler, who had been with him for years."

The Coroner hesitated a moment, and then dismissed him.

"I may want you again," he said, as Murphy took his seat.

Dan Simpson, the chauffeur, was the next witness called. He was a rather handsome young man, possessing a frank, open countenance.

"Where were you last night?" asked Davis, after he had been sworn.

"I took Miss Judd downtown in the limousine, and after we returned I went to bed."

"What time did you leave here and what time did you get back?"

"We left at ten minutes to nine. I remember, because I set the clock in the limousine just before I left the garage. We got back shortly after ten."

"Did you go any place in particular downtown?"

"No, sir."

"Isn't it a little peculiar for one to drive downtown merely for the drive, especially at night?"

"I don't think so. People's tastes don't all run the same. Miss Judd has had me take her on such trips frequently since her return."

"Did she meet any one, or visit a particular locality on these trips?"

"No, sir. She merely told me to drive downtown slowly and return home. I always chose the route. It never made any difference to her which way we went."

"Then you think she went just for the ride?"

"Certainly; there's no question about it."

I could see from Davis's face that he had expected to learn more from Simpson. I was surprised that he had not told about Miss Judd leaving the machine when I had seen her, and concluded that he did not intend telling any more than he absolutely had to.

"Did you see Doctor Judd last night?" was the next question.

"He came to the machine with Miss Judd and kissed her good-by. Both were in a very congenial mood. That was the last time I saw him."

Simpson was excused, and resumed his seat as calm as when he went upon the stand. Clara Emery, the cook, was the next witness called. She was nervous, her eyes scintillating with excitement. She said that she had not left the house the night before, nor heard of Doctor Judd's death until the butler told her that morning.

"Did you see Miss Judd after dinner last night?"

"Yes, sir."

"At what time?"

"At half-past nine."

The answer startled me, as it did every one else excepting Davis and Dugan. They had ascertained this before the inquest. Involuntarily I turned to Miss Judd to see what effect the answer had upon her. She

paled a trifle and bit her lips as if trying to stifle an exclamation.

"At half-past nine?" repeated Davis. "Are you sure the time was correct?"

"Yes, sir. My alarm clock had run down and I brought it downstairs to get the correct time from the big clock in the hall. Miss Judd was standing by the front door talking to Martin."

"How long did they talk?"

"I don't know. I set my clock and went back upstairs."

"Are you absolutely sure it was Miss Judd you saw?"

"I've been with the family ten years. I ought to know her when I see her."

Davis excused her, and put Dan Simpson on the stand again. Dan looked worried, as if he did not know just what to do.

"You heard Miss Emery's testimony," snapped the Coroner. "You can't both be right. Which one of you lied?"

"Neither one of us," replied Simpson, hotly, resentment taking the place of his worried expression. "One of us may have been mistaken, but neither of us deliberately lied, and you know we didn't. It is easy to make a mistake when merely glancing at a watch. I guess I made one when I set the clock in the limousine."

"No, you didn't," growled Davis. "The clock in the automobile is correct. I examined it just a while ago. Why did you concoct that story about taking Miss Judd downtown?"

If he was trying to make Simpson mad he succeeded admirably. But he wasn't the kind to lose his head and break into an abusive tirade when angry.

"Mr. Coroner, I'm under oath," he said calmly, yet his words had a sting to them. "That's twice you've called me a liar. I'll take that up with you later. I've told the truth and now I'm done. I've answered all the questions I'm going to."

And he meant what he said. Davis threatened and abused him, and even begged him for further information, but he sat silent, his jaw set, gazing straight ahead of him. Finally Davis gave it up and called Miss Judd.

CHAPTER FIVE

AS Miss Judd took the stand it was plainly evident that her assumed composure was rapidly leaving her. When the oath was administered her voice quavered pitifully in spite of her effort to control it, and I knew that she was exerting every ounce of her will power to keep from going to pieces.

I wished that I might take her place. It was hard to have to sit there helplessly while she underwent the rigid cross-examination that Davis evidently intended hurling at her. When he saw how near she was to a nervous collapse, his face reflected the satisfaction he felt. He was the kind of man who delighted in the discomfiture of others, and he intended making the most of his present opportunity. Before he had time to put a question, Miss Judd spoke.

"I want to make a statement before you start asking questions," she began. "I did not kill my uncle or have anything to do with it. I will give you what information I can, but you will probably ask me some questions which I cannot or will not answer. I have fully determined what course to follow, and nothing you can do or say will change me."

"We'll see about that," growled Davis. "We're here to find out who murdered Doctor Judd, and we're going to do it. The only evidence we have points to you or Martin, the butler, and I'll advise you, for your own good, to tell everything you know about the matter. Tell the jury, please, just what you did last night."

"Simpson took me for a drive after dinner. We returned about ten o'clock and I retired. My maid awoke me early this morning and told me of my uncle's death."

"Did you see Doctor Judd after you came home?"

"Yes. I looked into the library, saw that he was busy with his books, and did not disturb him."

"You heard the cook testify that she saw you here at half-past nine and you heard Simpson declare that you left here at ten minutes to nine. Which one of them lied?"

"Neither one," declared Miss Judd indignantly. "Both are thoroughly honest and reliable. They told the truth as far as they knew."

"You couldn't be two place at the same time," remonstrated Davis. "There couldn't be a mistake in the clocks, because the one in the limousine agrees now with the one in the hall, and so does the alarm clock used by the cook."

"Sure it does," interposed Clara Emery excitedly. "It wasn't running when I got up, so I set it again this morning. The thing don't run half the time."

"Shut up," snarled the Coroner, irritated by her interruption. "If we want any more testimony from you we'll put you on the stand again. You said that both the chauffeur and the cook were right, Miss Judd. Explain how they could be."

Miss Judd was rapidly losing what little control she had had over her nerves when she took the stand. She was trembling violently, all color had left her face, and she bit her lips incessantly to keep from bursting into tears. It was hard for me to keep from interfering, but I realized that I had no right to say anything. If I did interfere, I would probably do her more harm than good.

"That is one of the things I will not explain," she breathed, her voice scarcely audible. "I told you before there were some questions I would not answer."

"All right. You're only doing yourself harm." Davis glanced significantly at the jury and continued: "There are some footprints under the library window and your shoe fits them perfectly. Did you make them?"

"Miss Judd is on the verge of a nervous collapse," interrupted Doctor Stevenson. "Couldn't you postpone this inquest, Mr. Coroner, until she is in a better physical condition?"

"I'm running this, and I don't need any advice," answered Davis arrogantly. "Tell us about those footprints, Miss Judd."

"I cannot."

"Another point against you. Maybe you will tell us what you did with the medicine dropper which was on your uncle's table."

Miss Judd shrank from him as if he was about to strike her, and a pitiful look of horror came into her face. She opened her lips as if to speak, but instead uttered a low moan and collapsed. The next moment I had her in my arms. I was just in time to catch her as she fainted and fell from the chair. Doctor Stevenson rushed to us and in a few moments had revived her.

Davis insisted upon going on with the inquest, declaring that Miss Judd had assumed illness merely to avoid answering questions. But Doctor Stevenson objected strenuously. He said that Miss Judd's nervous system had not been equal to the terrific strain it had been subjected to, and that she was dangerously near a nervous collapse. He advised getting her to bed at once and sending for a trained nurse.

When Mr. Murphy heard what the doctor said he told us to help her upstairs at once. He gave the maid some instructions about preparing Miss Judd's room and then, turning to Davis, he began giving him a tongue-lashing that rivaled anything I had ever heard in that line.

When we reached the second floor we placed Miss Judd in an easychair in the room where I had first met her, and Doctor Stevenson went to phone for a nurse.

"Do you still believe I am innocent?" she asked as soon as we were alone.

"Absolutely," I answered, and I did.

"Thanks," she said, "you have more cause to believe me guilty than any one and I appreciate your loyalty. Some day I will explain all of this to you. Until I can, you will have to take my word for everything."

"I will always believe in you," I declared earnestly. "Extraordinary conditions often make firmer friends than lifetime acquaintance. I am always ready to do anything I can for you, and I hope you will not hesitate to ask for me if you need me."

"I'll begin asking favors now," she said, trying to smile. "Please stay in the house until this is all over. It will be comforting to me to know that I have a friend close at hand. I will probably need one."

"I will be glad to stay," I exclaimed, highly elated because she had asked even a small favor of me.

As she arose to accompany her maid she clasped my hand in both of hers.

"You have been very kind"—she murmured softly; then added, her face crimson with embarrassment—"dear friend."

I went downstairs and found Dugan.

"Davis had to postpone the inquest," he told me. "Mr. Murphy is an influential lawyer and he was afraid not to. What evidence we have collected so far has only mixed matters. I'll admit frankly that it's getting beyond me."

"It certainly is a complicated affair," I admitted. "The more we find out the worse it seems to get."

"I believe the butler is the key to the situation," declared Dugan. "I'm going to search his room again. Might pick up something we overlooked. Then I'm going out and find him."

"If you're going downtown you might get Simpson to take you in the car."

"I don't believe I could," he laughed. "They just took him to the police station. He tried to revise Davis's face as soon as he left the house."

"I hope he did a good job."

"He did," smiled Dugan. "I'll get him out as soon as I get downtown. If you care to go with me we'll take a look at Martin's room."

CHAPTER SIX

DOCTOR JUDD had evidently thought a great deal of Martin. He had provided a suite of rooms for him on the third floor—a sitting-room, bedroom and bath—and had furnished them more elaborately than servants' rooms are usually fitted up. Everything was in a disorderly condition, owing to the hasty search Dugan and Davis had made that morning.

We began going over everything systematically, hoping we might find something that would divert the evidence that pointed toward Miss Judd as the murderer of her uncle. But we were unable to find anything. Judging from his belongings, Martin was merely the methodical bachelor-servant he seemed to be.

When we had finished Dugan sat down on a library table in the sitting-room, idly fingering an English weekly and gazing about the room, searching for some crevice we might have overlooked.

"Don't seem to be anything out of the ordinary here," he said in a disappointed tone. "I thought we might find something. Martin undoubtedly had something to do with Doctor Judd's death or he knows something he didn't want to tell and was afraid we would make him. That's the only way I can account for his leaving so suddenly."

He sat for a moment in deep thought, softly whistling to himself. Then he turned to me suddenly.

"Did it occur to you that Miss Judd was very much relieved when she learned that Martin had made his getaway?" he asked.

"I couldn't help noticing that," I admitted reluctantly.

"I wonder why," mused Dugan. "If the doctor died of heart disease, as Doctor Stevenson believes, I'm badly fooled, Henderson. There's something behind Miss Judd's refusal to be frank about the matter and the butler probably knows what it is. I know you don't want to believe that Miss Judd knows anything about her uncle's death; I don't want to think so myself, for that matter, but we mustn't let our personal likes or dislikes interfere. Frankly, I don't like the stand Miss Judd has taken and I'm afraid she is going to have a rough road to travel before this is cleared up."

"It looks that way," I agreed gloomily. "Of course I don't believe she is implicated in any way, and I'm going to prove it."

"Hope you do," he smiled, sliding off the table.

As he did so he brushed the magazine he had been fingering to the floor. It opened as it fell, and a bill fluttered out and settled on the floor at his feet. It was a thousand-dollar bill, and when we went through the magazine we found nineteen more just like it.

"Do you remember what I told you about luck," grinned Dugan, stuffing the money into his pocket. "This should help to clear

up the matter. He is sure to come back after it."

"I suppose Doctor Judd caught him stealing it," I surmised, "and Martin killed him to keep from being found out."

"Maybe," mused Dugan, not giving my remark the attention I thought he should. "Wonder what the old man was doing with that much money in the house. Maybe it's not his at all. Let's ask if Mr. Murphy knows anything about it."

We found him pacing up and down the library. He felt Doctor Judd's death deeply and was in a nervous, rather irritable condition.

"Did Doctor Judd keep very much money in the house?" began Dugan.

"I don't think so," replied Mr. Murphy, surprised at the question. "He paid his bills by check and never had any use for a large amount. Why?"

"We found twenty thousand dollars hidden in Martin's room," explained Dugan. "I thought he might have stolen it from Doctor Judd and murdered him."

"I don't know why the doctor would have that much cash in the house, and I don't think he had," asserted Mr. Murphy. "Still, I don't believe Martin ever had that much money in his life. There's something queer been going on here."

"Undoubtedly," agreed Dugan. "Where did Doctor Judd do most of his banking business?"

"At the Third National. If you called them up they could tell you if he had drawn out any large amount of cash recently."

"They wouldn't tell me over the phone," asserted Dugan, reaching for his hat. "I'll run down there and see."

When Dugan had gone Mr. Murphy began pacing the floor again, and after I had ventured a few trite remarks and received only absentminded grunts as replies, I decided that he was not particularly anxious to have me around. So I went and sat in the reception-hall.

I felt like a fellow probably does who goes to a party without an invitation. I was lonesome and out of place. If I had not promised Miss Judd to stay I would have gone home. Time certainly drags when one has to sit around with nothing to do. While I was sitting there wondering how many more weeks it would be before the clock struck the quarter hour again, the nurse came in. She was Jimmy's Miss Black; or, I should say, she was the Miss Black who Jimmy wanted to be his. A year before he had had appendicitis, and ever since she had had him.

"The doctor will probably give my patient a narcotic," she said when I had finished telling who I was. "Maybe I'll get a chance to come downstairs after a while. If you are so terribly lonesome, why don't you call up Jimmy and have him come out?"

"I hadn't thought of that," I smiled. "I'll call him right away. And to be sure that he comes I'll tell him that you suggested it."

"All right," she laughed, moving toward the stairway. "I really would like to see him. Will you show me where the patient is or shall I just go upstairs?"

"I'll show you," I answered, glad to get away from that gloomy hall even for a moment.

Miss Judd's maid met us at the head of the stairway. When she saw Miss Black I imagined she drew back a trifle as though she had been startled. But when I introduced them she seemed thoroughly composed, and I was convinced that I had been mistaken. I asked about Miss Judd, and was told that she was sleeping under the influence of some drug the doctor had given her.

When I went downstairs again to wait for Dugan, Mr. Murphy was standing at the foot of the stairway.

"I don't see the necessity of thrusting detectives upon us in droves," he growled. "One would think this was a beehive of criminals. At times like this one does not appreciate having strangers forcibly thrust upon them. I don't mind you so much, but I do object strenuously to their sending a spy disguised as a nurse to wait upon Miss Judd. It's outrageous."

"Miss Black is a real nurse," I assured him, "and I'm not a detective. I am a friend of Miss Judd's and am staying here at her request. She knew that Doctor Judd's

death would upset you and thought that I might be of some assistance."

He looked me squarely in the eyes for some moments as though trying to fathom what was going on in my mind. Deep lines of trouble creased his countenance and the corners of his mouth twitched nervously.

"I beg your pardon," he finally said, gripping my hand impulsively. "I'm not myself today. I'm an old man, Mr. Henderson, a very old man, and I've—I've lost my only friend." He stopped talking, his emotion almost getting the upper hand. "If —if anything should happen to that girl," he continued, "I don't believe I could stand it."

"Nothing will," I answered, assuming as cheerful a tone as possible. "The whole matter will probably be cleared up as soon as Dugan gets back."

"I fervently hope so," he said, apparently a trifle relieved. "I'll have the cook prepare some lunch for you. I'm too nervous to eat anything."

He left and I went to telephone Jimmy. But I couldn't find him. About three o'clock Dugan came in.

"Things look brighter for Miss Judd," he smiled. "They told me at the bank that Doctor Judd cashed a twenty-thousand-dollar check yesterday and received the money in thousand-dollar bills."

"Then Martin undoubtedly murdered him," I exclaimed, infinitely relieved.

"Sure," Dugan asserted. "We're combing the city for him now and he hasn't a chance to get away. When we get him we won't have any trouble clearing everything up."

"If Miss Judd is awake let's tell her," I suggested excitedly. "It will surely be a relief to her to know that she isn't suspected any more," and we went to her room.

"I have some very good news for you," began Dugan cheerfully. "I found out that Doctor Judd drew twenty thousand dollars from the bank yesterday, and when we searched Martin's room we found that amount hidden in a magazine. He evidently robbed your uncle."

As he spoke Miss Judd became paler even than she had been. Her eyes opened wide, and a hopeless expression of anguish came over her countenance.

"No—no," she protested vehemently. "That wasn't Uncle John's money. It was mine. I gave it to Martin this morning to keep for me. He didn't steal it."

Then with a low, pitiful moan she hid her face in the pillow and began to sob hysterically. Miss Black ordered us out at once. As we were leaving I turned and saw that Mr. Murphy had hidden his face in his hands.

CHAPTER SEVEN

AFTER we came downstairs, Dugan went to use the telephone, and I went into the library and stood at a window gazing absently at the street.

Presently Dugan came in. He sat for a long time, his fingers drumming nervously on the arm of his chair, his mind concentrated upon the problems before him.

"Thought we had everything moving along nicely," he finally said, smiling at me whimsically, "but Miss Judd seems to have shot my surmises all to pieces. I can't understand her, Henderson. She didn't tell the truth about that $20,000."

"How do you know she didn't?" I demanded with some heat.

"I called up Headquarters and had them send a man to every bank in town. Miss Judd has never had that much money deposited in any bank here. If she had cashed a check for that amount any paying-teller in the world would have remembered cashing it."

"Probably she has been carrying it in cash," I suggested lamely.

"You don't believe anything like that," he smiled. "There's no use beating around the bush about this matter. Miss Judd is implicated in some way."

"You—you wouldn't give a woman the third degree?" I cried in alarm.

"It's been done," he asserted grimly. "I wouldn't do it, because I have a streak of sympathy in me that interferes with my business. But if we don't get this thing

straightened out and the bulls' downtown get hold of her, I'd hate to think about what would happen. But, believe me, if I ever get that butler I'll know him for all I'm worth."

"Do you think there's any chance of catching him?"

"Surely. He'll never leave town without trying to get that $20,000 he had hidden in his room. I have two good men laying for him to come back. But I'm not depending upon that entirely. Every plainclothes man and every 'bull' in town has his eye out for him. I'm going away now and I don't know when I'll be back. You sit right here and watch this telephone. I've disconnected every other phone in the house, so if any messages come in or go out of here they will have to be over this one. If you want me call up Headquarters. They'll know where to find me."

"All right. I'll call you in an hour or two and tell you I have the murderer corraled," I answered, with a weak attempt to be jocular.

It was a long gloomy afternoon for me. No one approached me except Miss Judd's maid. She came in late in the afternoon and asked me if she might use the phone.

"I tried the one upstairs, but it seems to be out of order," she explained.

I readily assented and walked into the other room. But I stood close to the door where I could hear everything she said. She called for 5503 Broadway.

"Is this Melberg & Company?" she asked, when the connection was made. "This is Miss Judd's maid speaking. Can you tell me when her suit will be done? About nine o'clock tonight? No; there is no need of your delivering it then. But do not fail to have it here early in the morning. You understand that she has to have it for the funeral tomorrow afternoon. All right. Thanks!"

There did not seem to be anything peculiar about the conversation, except finishing a suit at nine o'clock at night. That was rather an odd time, but the order had evidently been an emergency one. To satisfy myself, I looked up Melberg & Company in the telephone book. Their number was Olive 4342. The maid had surmised that I would listen and had tried to throw me off the track. Naturally I wanted to know who she had called, so I took the telephone directory and began going through it methodically looking for number 5503 Broadway. After a long time I found what I was looking for. It was a saloon on Market street.

I called up police headquarters to tell Dugan what I knew, but he wasn't there. They promised to have him call me as soon as they could locate him.

Jimmy called me up about seven o'clock. As soon as he learned that Miss Black was in the house he came right up. We went into the library and Jimmy wanted me to call her at once.

"I can't do that," I said, smiling at his impatience. "She is with Miss Judd. You know a nurse cannot leave a patient just when she wants to."

Just then Miss Black came in

"Disagreeing at usual," she laughed, shaking hands with Jimmy. "I should think you two would get over that some time."

"I'm over it right now," Jimmy grinned. "The soothing effect you have upon my shattered nerves is wonderful."

"His brain must be shattered as well as his nerves," I declared, turning to Miss Black. "The poor idiot thinks Miss Judd had something to do with the doctor's death."

"And you evidently don't," she laughed. "Well, neither do I. Do either of you know anything about Miss Judd's maid?"

We both shook our heads.

"Well, I know this girl. Last year I went to Jeffersonville to nurse a particular friend of mine, whose husband is warden of the penitentiary there. This same girl was a trusty, and was acting as a sort of general utility maid for my friend. I didn't learn what she was sent to prison for.

"I would have told you sooner," stated Miss Black, "but I couldn't remember where I had seen the girl until a few minutes ago. She is watching Miss Judd for me now, but asked me to relieve her at

nine o'clock as she wants to take a walk. She has been in the house all day and needs some fresh air."

"Maybe that's the reason she wants to go out and maybe it's not," I said, thinking of the telephone conversation I had overheard. "I'm going to follow her."

I slipped out of the house and stood in the shadow of the porch waiting. As I stood there I wondered how this strange affair would end. I believed that Miss Judd was innocent, but I could not understand why she had given me the medicine dropper or why she would not tell what she knew at the inquest.

It seemed to me that I stood more than an hour waiting for the maid to come out. In fact, it was not more than half that time. When she reached the sidewalk she turned east and I followed, keeping about a half-block behind her. At Sarah street she hesitated, and I thought she was going to take a car, but in a moment she turned south and quickened her pace. About halfway down the second block she turned and ran up the steps of a flat.

I did not know what to do. The maid might have been just what she pretended to be. If she was, and was merely making a call upon some friend of hers, it would be embarrassing, to say the least, if I should be caught snooping around.

It was an upstairs flat, so I had to either take a chance on gaining an entrance and being caught in some one's house where I had no business, or watching until she came out. If I did the latter, she could go on through the house, out the back way, and be lost as far as I was concerned.

I hesitated, all those possibilities racing through my brain. Then I thought of what Jimmy would say if I failed. I was willing to risk almost anything in preference to the sarcastic remarks he would hurl at me in case the girl succeeded in giving me the slip.

I walked boldly up to the door and turned the knob. To my surprise the door had not been locked. Before I fully realized what I was doing I was cautiously making my way up the stairs.

CHAPTER EIGHT

AS I neared the top of the stairway I could hear the low murmur of voices somewhere in the rear of the house, and when I finally reached the hallway on the second floor I saw a light shining through the half-opened doorway of what I thought was a dining-room.

I crept down the hall on my hands and knees, breathing only at such times as was absolutely necessary. As I neared the doorway I recognized the voice of Miss Judd's maid.

"Listen, Red," she was saying earnestly. "It's time for us to beat it while the going's good. Everything has broken just right for us so far, and I don't believe in pushing our luck too hard. You can say what you please, but I'm not going back to that house."

"You're going to do just what I tell you," replied the voice of a man. "The quicker you get that through your head the better we're going to get along."

I arose to my feet, standing well back in the shadow, and peered into the room. Miss Judd's maid was sitting at a dining-table, her back to me, and the man sat opposite, directly facing me. He was a young man, possibly twenty-five years old, and there was a certain forcefulness about his features that indicated he was accustomed to being obeyed. He was handsome in a way, but there was a cruel hardness about his countenance that gave one an unpleasant uneasiness. This was largely due to his eyes, small and penetrating, like those of a reptile about to strike. He was leaning over the table toward the girl, his mouth set in a contemptuous grin.

"I suppose I will," she answered hopelessly. "I was merely telling you what I thought. You needn't get sore about it."

"I'm not sore, Lil," he said, leaning back in his chair as though relieved. "I thought for a minute you had cold feet, and that's something I won't stand for. Whenever any one shows the yellow sign I'm off them fer life."

"I'm no quitter and you know it," protested the maid. "But I'm no fool either,

and when I see the handwriting on the wall I can usually read it. That nurse knew me. She was waiting on the warden's wife when I was doing time in Jeffersonville. She'll put Dugan next just as soon as she sees him, and Dugan's no ordinary bull, you know that, Red."

"He's smart," admitted Red. "You have to watch him. But there are other smart people in the world." Suddenly a look of intense hate came over his features. "It may be time to leave," he continued, "but I hate to leave before I settle with that white-livered Martin. He tried to double-cross us on that second twenty thousand, Lil. I'll make him pay for that, and pay well."

"You could have knocked me down with a feather when I heard that Dugan had found it in his room," replied Lil. "When he disappeared I thought the going had warmed up too much for him and he couldn't stand the pace. Never thought for a minute that he had made a second haul and had attached it so he could have it all for himself. Well, he didn't get away with it. That's one consolation."

"What does Marguerite Judd think about it?"

"She was the maddest woman I ever saw when she heard about it. She couldn't imagine where he got it unless the old man had it hid somewhere. Wish you could have seen her perform, Red. She's the greatest little actress I ever saw. When they got to pushing her pretty hard at the inquest, she pulled off a faint that was a dream. And now she's got them all believing she has had a nervous collapse."

"No one suspicions her at all, do they?" inquired Red.

"I should say not," laughed Lil. "Why, she's got Dugan and some poor boob, I don't know just what he is, working their heads off to prove her innocence. There's a smart girl, Red. I was leery of her when you first made the deal, I'll admit, but she's there with the goods. You have to hand it to her."

As they talked I had trouble restraining myself. I wanted to rush in and tell them that it was not true. It was hard to believe that the girl I had fallen in love with could be complicated in such a nefarious scheme, but how could I think otherwise? The whole foul plot was being exposed as I stood there listening. I wished fervently that I had not followed Jimmy into the Judd house that morning. I was happy then.

I lost sight of the danger I was in. A ruthless gang of criminals who had deliberately planned the murder of an old man to gain possession of his money would not hesitate to silence me forever if they learned that I knew all about their plot. But at the moment I did not care what happened to me. I even contemplated rushing in and having it out with the man called Red. As I stood there, contemplating whether to do this or slip out and try to locate Dugan, I felt a cold, round piece of steel pressed against the back of my neck.

"March right into that room," a man whispered. "If you make any false moves I'll blow your neck in two."

I did as he told me. The two occupants jumped to their feet as we entered, and when Lil saw who I was she laughed.

"It's the poor fish that's so crazy about Marguerite," she grinned. "Where did you pick him up, Mark?"

"Found him standing in the hall listening," replied my captor. "Don't know how long he's been there."

"Ever since I came in," asserted Lil.

"He picked up an earful," remarked Red. He turned to me and smiled, an evil, malicious grin. "Knowledge is a great thing," he continued, "but there's such a thing as knowing too much. After what you heard tonight it wouldn't be safe for us to have you running around loose. What'll we do with him, Mark?"

"Bump him off, of course," replied Mark without a moment's hesitation.

"That's dangerous business," interposed Lil. "If we get caught we're sure to swing for it."

"We're sure to, anyway, if we get caught."

"Not necessarily," said Red. "Marguerite might, but they couldn't prove anything on the rest of us. But get that off your mind. We're not going to get caught."

"I think you are. Hands up, everybody."

In the doorway stood Dugan, backed up by four policemen, an automatic in his hand. As he spoke, Dugan began shooting. Instead of raising his hands, Red snatched a gun from his pocket and opened fire. I heard the report of the guns and then suddenly my vision left me and I felt myself falling.

CHAPTER NINE

TWO days later I awakened in the hospital. A stray bullet from Red's gun had hit me in the head, inflicting a dangerous and almost fatal wound. A week passed before they would allow me to have any visitors. During that time Miss Judd sent me flowers every day. They would have been a great comfort if I had not known what I did about her. As it was, they merely caused me to become melancholy, thinking of what might have been and now never could be. I did not care whether I recovered or not, but in spite of this my wound did remarkably well. When they told me, at last, that I could have a visitor, I sent for Dugan.

"You had a narrow escape, old man," he smiled cheerfully, shaking hands. "What do you think of the detective game by this time?"

"I'm off it for life," I answered, wondering how any one could be so cheerful. "One learns too many disagreeable things."

"Your introduction was rather rough," he grinned. "Some of these days when you get better I'll tell you all about what happened."

"You'll tell me right now," I declared vehemently. "That's the reason I sent for you."

"All right, if you think you can stand it," he agreed, pulling a chair close to my bed.

"When I left you the other afternoon, I went to Headquarters to see if any reports on the butler had come in. They hadn't found him, but they had a line on the maid. Guess you thought I had overlooked her. She had served a year in the pen at Jeffersonville for stealing jewelry. At that time she gave her name as Lillian Feldon.

"I believe I told you that there was a great deal of luck connected with the detective business. It sure helped me in this case. While I was going over the maid's record a report came in, from a stool-pigeon, that Red Dawson was flush. And when a crook begins to spend money lavishly it's a sure sign that he has made a good haul some place.

"We've been after Red for a long time. He was a smart crook, away above the average, and had been so successful that he was getting careless. They all do, sooner or later.

"The fact that he was in town and that Lillian Feldon had a criminal record caused me to take a long chance. I decided to locate Red, hoping that he might throw some light upon Doctor Judd's death.

"I picked him up at a saloon on Market street. He had been drinking a little, not much, but enough to dull in a measure the acuteness of his brain. I didn't have any trouble following him to the flat on Sarah street.

"I was across the street when the girl went in, and I saw you blundering along behind her. She knew you were following her before you were ten feet away from the Judd house.

"You had hardly entered the flat before a man slipped around the porch and followed you. I knew you were in for some sort of a warm reception, so gathered a few policemen before going after you. There might have been a gang in the house. I didn't know.

"When I saw Red pull that gun, I knew he would either get me or I had to get him, so I fired first. He was shot through the lungs and died before we could get him to the hospital.

"Lil saw him die and lost her nerve. You see, she thought Red was infallible, and when her main support was gone she collapsed and told me everything.

"She had worked some in the East with Red before she was sent over the road, and as soon as she was released she went to New York looking for him. But New

York was too warm for him and he had gone West.

"By using false references she had secured a position as extra maid in one of the big hotels there and in that way met Miss Judd. Miss Judd took a fancy to her; she could be a very likable girl when she wanted to, and she offered her a regular position. Word had come to her that Red was in St. Louis, so she accepted.

"She met him here and they rented a flat on Sarah street. They decided that it was best for her to keep on working. She was to keep her eyes open, and if she found anything worth while they were to rob the place.

"The day Doctor Judd brought home the twenty thousand dollars—we've never been able to find out why he did it—she accidentally saw him count the money and put it away in his desk. She immediately called up Red and they planned to rob the old gentleman that night.

"Lil could have stolen the money easily enough, but Red was too smart to let her do that. He knew that when the police investigated they would dig up her prison record. He and a pal of his, Eddie Randal, broke into the house that night and stole the money.

"They swear that Doctor Judd was not murdered. Eddie says that when they found him in the library and told him what they had come for the old gentleman just stiffened out in his chair and died. I'm inclined to believe that he told the truth. That poison in his eye theory always did sound flimsy to me. According to Doctor Stevenson, he had been troubled with heart disease for a number of years, and I think that the sudden appearance of the two crooks caused his heart to stop."

"How long were you in the flat before you shot Red," I asked eagerly.

All the time he had been talking I had been thinking of the conversation I had heard between Lil and Red. And I had been trying to make up my mind to do the right thing and tell Dugan about it. But I couldn't. If he hadn't been in the flat long enough to hear what I had he wouldn't know about Miss Judd being implicated, and although I knew it was a dishonorable thing to do I decided to shield her. A man will do anything for a woman he really loves.

Dugan laughed.

"I was there long enough to hear nearly everything they had to say," he asserted. "But if I were you I wouldn't get all worked up about that. What they said about Miss Judd was bull, pure and simple."

"I—I—don't understand," I stammered, unable to grasp just what he meant.

"They were talking for your benefit," explained Dugan. "They knew you were standing there listening."

"I don't understand why they did that," I said. "But of course as they intended killing me it would make no difference."

"They never intended to kill you. They were in enough trouble as it was. I told you Red was smart. He knew that the more leads the police had to follow, the better chance he had to get away. The advantage would be small, but he figured that it would be easier for us to watch one person than two, and sometimes a man's liberty depends upon as small a thing as that. They intended locking you in the bathroom and having some one telephone us where you were. Then when you told us what you had heard he thought we would try to make Miss Judd tell something she didn't know."

"So Miss Judd didn't know a thing about them?" I exclaimed, wonderfully relieved.

"Not a thing," grinned Dugan.

"Call a taxi," I commanded, getting out of bed. "I'm going right out there."

"You are not," asserted Dugan, pushing me back in bed again. "You're going to stay right here until you get better."

"I'm well right now," I growled, jumping up again. "I'm either going or I'll make it interesting for the bunch around here."

Dugan saw that I was in earnest and rang for the doctor. By the time he arrived with two nurses I was partially dressed. They argued with me, but I went right ahead dressing. I was determined to see Miss Judd regardless of consequences. Dugan went with me. There were a number of things about Doctor Judd's death

that were not clear and, being human, he was curious.

When we arrived at the Judd home Martin, the butler, admitted us. He took us into the library and went to call Miss Judd. Presently she came down the stairway, and as I saw her my heart sank, weighed down by an overwhelming load of despondency. It was with an effort that I stifled a cry of dismay. There was a young man with her, a remarkably handsome young man, and he had his arm around her waist.

CHAPTER TEN

WHEN Miss Judd saw who we were she came toward us eagerly, the young man hesitating politely in the doorway.

"Having two heroes call at the same time is quite an honor," she smiled, shaking hands with us. "From what they told me at the hospital, I didn't think you would be out for some time, Mr. Henderson."

"He shouldn't be out now," declared Dugan. "But the doctors thought it would be better for him to come than to have a fight with him. When he gets his head set, he's hard to handle, Miss Judd."

"Nonsense," I interrupted. "I'm just as well as I ever was. I think the doctors grossly exaggerated my condition."

"Indeed they did not," she asserted seriously. "You were in a very serious condition, and you cannot imagine what a relief it is to me to know that you are all right again." She turned to the young man. "Come in, Jack. I want you to meet my two heroes, Mr. Dugan and Mr. Henderson. This is my twin brother, gentlemen. I'm awfully proud of him."

I felt like one does when an agonizing pain has been quieted by morphine. Now I could hope again. At least I had a chance. Miss Judd had sent flowers to me every day while I was in the hospital, and she had seemed infinitely relieved when she saw that I was able to be about again. I hoped that her concern for me was prompted by something deeper than gratitude.

"From what you've told me, Marguerite," the young man said, after we had acknowledged the introduction, "these gentlemen are entitled to an explanation." He laughed. "You made them work pretty hard to keep you out of jail, so I think it's up to you to tell them why you did it."

"There are a few things about the case that I would like to know," admitted Dugan.

"It will all sound very foolish to you now," laughed Miss Judd. "I shouldn't have acted the way I did, but I think I can make you see that I, at least, had some excuse for doing it. Gather around closely, all of you, and listen to the tragic story of my life.

"Jack and I are orphans. We were babies when our parents died. Our father left us a little money; one of our aunts took care of us until we were six years old, and then Doctor Judd took me to raise. He had never liked Jack, but had always been very fond of me. When he was sixteen years old he ran away from our aunt and came here. He demanded that Uncle John, who had our money in trust, give him his part of what our father had left us. He wanted to go to South America to make his fortune. Of course Uncle John refused. Jack raged like a madman. He was very abusive, claiming that Uncle John was holding his money to get possession of it; he swore that on the day he was twenty-one years old he would be back, and if Uncle John did not have his money here for him he would kill him. Then he disappeared, and none of us heard of him until the day Uncle John died. It may seem foolish to all of you, but I brooded about what he had said until I actually believed he would carry out his threat. Uncle John was a headstrong old man; he was very angry about what Jack had said, and I was afraid he would not listen to him if he did come back.

"I had twenty thousand dollars in a safety deposit box. Uncle John had put it there for me. He was peculiar about financial matters. He told me that he had seen a number of fortunes come and go and that nothing was sure but actual money. He wanted me provided for in case financial

disaster came to him, and he claimed that was the only sure way of doing it.

"The morning of my twenty-first birthday Jack called me up and said that he would be out to see us some time during the day. Naturally I was overjoyed at the thought of seeing him again, but I was apprehensive about what would happen when he and Uncle John met. I did not know at the time that he had succeeded in curbing his ungovernable temper, so decided to get the twenty thousand dollars I had in the safety deposit box and when he came give it to him, telling him that Uncle John had left it for him. In that way I hoped to be able to keep them from meeting.

"Martin has always been a great friend of mine. I have known him ever since I came here, and have always made a confidant of him. He knew all about my troubles and watched for Jack while I hurried downtown and got the money.

"You can imagine what a nervous strain I was under all day waiting for Jack to come. After dinner I became so nervous that I couldn't stay in the house any longer, so had Simpson take me for a drive. Before going I advanced the clock in the hall an hour. I did this in order to have Mr. Murphy out of the way in case Jack came. He is one of the most methodical men in the world. Every night at nine o'clock he invariably goes to his room. That accounts for the contradictory evidence given by Simpson and Emma. Simpson set the clock in the limousine before I had changed the one in the hall and Emma set her clock afterwards. I also gave Martin the twenty thousand dollars; told him what it was for, and instructed him to give it to Jack in case he came before I returned.

"When I came home I slipped around the house to the library window, thinkdng that possibly Jack had arrived and was with Uncle John. There was no one there but Uncle John, so I decided that something had detained Jack and that he would be out the next day.

"The next morning, when I heard the circumstances of Uncle John's death, I was afraid Jack had had something to do with it.

"I wrote him a note, begging him to leave, and sent Martin to search all the hotels for him. Martin did not want to carry my twenty thousand dollars with him, so hid it in his room before he left.

"When I learned that I was under suspicion, I decided to do all I could to advance that theory. That would at least give Jack time to get away, and if the worst came to the worst, I could tell the truth and clear myself. I guess that is about all there is to tell."

"Not all," interposed Jack. "I have a few words to say and then the motion to adjourn will be in order.

"When I was a kid, I believe I had the worst temper a kid was ever blessed with. No wonder Marguerite was apprehensive about what I would do when I grew up. She didn't know that I had learned to handle myself.

"When I ran off, I went to South America, but I didn't find the end of the rainbow waiting for me. I've worked hard ever since I landed to earn enough money to bring me back. But it was good for me and made me a halfway sort of a man, anyway. After I telephoned Marguerite on my birthday, I had a sudden attack of ptomaine poisoning, and for two days I was too sick to think of anything. In fact, I was delirious most of the time. Martin found me in the hospital, and told me everything as soon as I was able to listen. Of course I came right out here as soon as possible.

"And now that the tiresome job of explaining everything is over, we'll speak of something more pleasant. I want you both to stay and have dinner with us."

"We've saved the fatted calf until you two could be here and help the prodigal to eat it," laughed Miss Judd.

"There's nothing in the world I'd rather do than stay," declared Dugan, looking at his watch. "But I'll have to go down to Headquarters first. Unfortunately, I'm a working man."

"I'll drive you down in the car," offered Jack. "I suppose these two will excuse us."

"With pleasure," I said boldly.

They both laughed, and a sudden flood of color came to Miss Judd's face.

"We won't exceed the speed limit," promised Jack as they left.

I had been praying for a chance to be alone with Miss Judd, and now that it had presented itself I was self-conscious and embarrassed. I did not know what to say. I wanted to propose to her, but my tongue absolutely refused to say the words that formed in my mind.

"Were you surprised at the way this affair terminated?" Miss Judd finally asked, after we had been silent for some time.

"Yes," I stammered. "But we don't want to talk about that now."

"We have to talk about something," she smiled. As she spoke I looked into her eyes, and somehow I knew that words would be superfluous. I went to her and kissed her reverently. When two people really love one another they know it without having to tell about it.

"Aren't you going to ask me to explain about the medicine dropper?" asked Marguerite, after a time.

"I don't care anything about it," I smiled, squeezing her hand affectionately.

"But I want you to know," she answered. "It was a ridiculous thing to do, so I wouldn't tell the rest about it. Last winter I joined our school soroity. Before a girl can become a full-fledged member, she has to wink at a stranger, and if he does not wink back she must hand him a medicine dropper, done up in a package like the one you received. It is a test that must be accomplished before one can become a real member. That's why I had Dan drive me downtown so often at night. I was trying to summon up enough courage to wink at a stranger. When I came downstairs that night I had forgotten the dropper, so had Martin slip into the library and get the one Uncle John used. I intended bringing him another when I came home, but was too excited to think of it. I realize how very foolish a thing like that must sound to you."

"It brought us together," I laughed, taking her in my arms again. "Anything that did that couldn't be foolish."

A CRIME DETECTOR

THE French are an ingenious race. They are keen for methods of baffling the commission of crime and in solving mysteries. Their police, ever on the alert for new discoveries, have recently unearthed another aid to crime detection. Its discoverer was a well-known physician named Locard, who figured in a sensational poison-pen case that was in the courts. He calls his new discovery "crime dust," and has presented it to the Prefect of Police to be utilized in solving difficult cases. His theory, a novel one, is that the dust from a man's clothing examined under the microscope shows exactly where the individual has been. Here is an example of the way the theory works out:

A tramp was suspected of being implicated in a murder that occurred in a limestone quarry. Arrested and questioned, he denied having ever been in a limestone quarry. He claimed that the dust found on his clothing came from sleeping in fields. Microscopic examination of the dust and careful chemical analysis proved it to be lime dust. Seeing that his statement was proven false, the man broke down under a heavy grilling and finally confessed having killed the man in the lime quarry. He slept near his victim till next day, when he left the place and headed for Paris. He was intercepted on the road, arrested, and later Dcotor Locard's theory proved his undoing.

What Does Your Handwriting Tell You?

By LOUISE RICE

NERO was a madman, but he had flashes of intelligence. One of those flashes has to do with something which is a most important element in the scientific life of today. As Nero lived when the Christian religion was just introduced and spent his leisure hours in burning those who had taken up the new faith, it is clear that the flash alluded to had some potency. Said he, on an occasion when he was writing to a friend: *There can be little doubt that handwriting shows the inward nature of him who uses it.*"

That remark, dropped into the abyss of Time, did not bear fruit until sixteen hundred, when a gentleman in Italy named Baldo got out a little pamphlet explaining what handwriting told about the character and talents of the writer. He had seen that Nero had a real idea, and he had gone on to develop it. People were busy about that time, having rather more of fighting than was usual even for Italy, and the pamphlet gathered dust in a nobleman's library until Goethe, who was always mentally hungry, found it in the course of some of his prowling excursions into old museums.

He had already made some deductions about what handwriting would tell if interrogated by an intelligent and trained eye, and to these he now added the discoveries of Baldo.

After that, investigating the meaning of handwriting was fashionable, as it were, in scientific circles, and more and more people took it up. I suppose that today, if we count the amateurs, we might say that there are literally millions of people in the world who know at least something about graphology. If you will consult the dictionary you find this: *"Graphology*—The art of judging of a person's character, disposition and aptitude from his handwriting."

The logical way in which the deductions of character are made is not only intensely interesting, but is sometimes vastly amusing. When, for instance, you have learned that the line of writing—that basic line on which the writing either actually rests, or rests in theory—is also the line of disposition and that it corresponds exactly to the formation of the mouth, which shows the disposition, you will be tickled to see the thin, stern and unyielding mouth of the Puritanic fanatic repeated in the line of his writing, which looks as though it had been made by a ruler. The whimsical girl with her mouth quirked up every which way will have a wavy line of writing that will reproduce that kissable feature with surprising fidelity.

Writing which suddenly slants downward on the last word or two of a line shows the same depression which is indicated by the sharply down-drawn corners of a mouth. The not so sharply down-drawn but unsmiling mouth is graphologically reproduced by a steady fall of the line of writing toward the lower righthand corner of the written page. Visionary people, always smiling and hopeful, like Mr. Micawber, of "something turning up," send their lines of writing skipping upward at an alarming angle.

The sudden change in the line of writing should always be viewed with interest. A

change from a straight-across-the-page line to one that slants upward shows a tremendous increase in hope, happiness and self-confidence. A change to the other extreme is a most disquieting indication and should never pass unnoticed. It means that the writer is either depressed or actively unhappy, and often it means that an illness is coming. Again and again graphologists, on seeing the sudden change to downward in the basic line of writing, have stated the probable presence of some sickness as yet not in evidence, and it is seldom that a mistake has been made.

If it is true suicides are always mentally ill, the letters and notes which they leave behind them are wonderful evidences for the assertion. I have many such bits of writing, which I have been able to compare with specimens previously written, and in them there is always the characteristic suicide indication, the very abrupt dropping of the last word or the last two words on *each* line of writing. All suicide notes do not have this indication, since some people shuffle off this mortal coil (apparently, at least) with the greatest calmness, and the dropping of the final letters of a line of writing, as a suicide indication, means that the life goes out in the midst of great turmoil of mind and bitter misery of heart.

Many of the graphological indications of character are so simple and so easily "read" that any one, even a child, can understand and apply them. Take the letter "i," for instance.

When the dot of this letter flies high over the upper part we may be sure that we have to deal with an imaginative and impulsive and ardent nature. These are the people who never successfully collect the money which is owing them, but who do win great friendships and intense loves. The "i" which has a dot which hugs it tightly, crouching right over the body of the letter, shows the reverse: a nature which will reckon the dimes with close attention and which will give little.

When the "i" dot is a dash instead of a rounded dot it is an indication that the user has a sense of humor. The absence of the dot, if more than very occasionally, is a sign of a mentality which is just bordering on the unsound.

The letter "t" is an exact measure of the degree, extent and variety of human will power.

Take the long, sweeping "t." If you see it in the handwriting of some quiet little invalid, don't take it for granted that the science of graphology is at fault. Just to have lived and kept a smile and remained uncomplaining may have cost more will exertion that the wining of half the battles of the world. Don't be too astonished, either, when famous men and those who seem to have made successes of their lives show up with short and insignificant "t" bars which show them to be creatures of fate only. Many a person who has the reputation for greatness owes it to the fact that they have had a clever husband or wife, or unusual "influence," or a great deal of money.

When the bar of the "t" slants sharply downward, and is strong and positive, you may be sure that that is a person who will argue down to the very door of death. He will have dauntless courage and enormous mental vitality, but he will be a person who ought never to be chosen for a constant associate.

Long, delicate "t" bars in a refined script show a writer who is spiritually and morally strong of will. These are the most wonderful persons in the world and their power, once it is gained, is tremendous. It is not surprising to find that great teachers and preachers and artists use this kind of a "t" bar.

The "t" which is not crossed by a bar, but which has a loop which is an integral part of the letter instead, is the "t" of persistence. People who use this are the never-say-die sort.

Affection has so many varying shades of intensity and coolness, of passion, ardor and all, that it is one of the most interesting of human elements to deal with, either at first hand or through the handwriting.

Primarily, affection is shown in the slant of the writing. This, of course, is also affected by many other character parts, but from the slant alone we may learn broadly what is the temperament of our beloved and

whether she would prefer a box of candy to the most impassioned kisses we could give her.

Writing which is sharply individual and which is also "backhand" is a puzzler. If it is full of heavy strokes and irregular letter formations we have to do with a sensitive, most ardent nature which is very apt to pretend great coldness and unfeelingness, as a means of covering what would be too easily hurt were it exposed. The even and rounded letters which are written in backhand are produced by school teachers and librarians and others whose work demands care and neatness. Often those very people will write quite differently when away from their professional duties.

Upright handwriting with rounded letter formations shows the very mild nature which neither loves nor hates. As soon as the writing begins to slant over to the right we come into the circle of those who are amorous, ardent, fond of caresses, proud and independent to the world, but humility itself to those for whom they care.

The writing which slants far over to the right, and which is accompanied by unusual letter formations and extreme variability, is the expression of a nature which is "high-strung," as the saying is—the saying which tells exactly what such people are.

When the upper parts of "h" and "l" and "t" and "d" are higher in proportion than the tails of "y" and "g" and "p" are, you may be sure that you are dealing with a visionary, one whose eyes and thoughts are so fixed on matters of a spiritual nature that they have no time or strength for affairs of this earth. These people make wonderful revivalists and charity workers, since they are able to entirely forget themselves in the service of others, but they are not of much use in the workaday world.

Long tails to "y" and "g" show the opposite extreme. Such an indication is for hearty interest in the world, for mild good humor, for moderation and for an eye to the main chance. One of the curiosities of this matter of the long tail is that when "p" has an extra long lower stroke it is an indication, not only of a strong interest in the material world, but of skill in sports and a physique which makes such skill easy to attain.

Capitals, when ornamented, express poor artistic taste. When too severe they show a lack of interest in normal beauty and an excess of interest in the kind of art which has little contact with a world of tradition.

In this connection it is an amusing thing to see, on investigation, that the Cubists and Futurists, as individuals, write this very severe capital style.

Look *your* handwriting over, with even these very elemental graphologisal guides, and you will be surprised to see how much you can learn about yourself.

ROBBERIES INCREASE INSURANCE RATES

A READJUSTMENT of burglary insurance rates, said to be due to the increased number of fur and silk robberies in the city of New York, has been made by representatives of all the large burglary insurances companies.

An increased rate of 25 per cent. on furs and silks went into effect the beginning of this year. Company representatives claim that losses of fur and silk insurance in the past three years have averaged 140 per cent.

As an offset to the allowed increase, a reduction of 50 per cent. was allowed to insurance groups that have showed no losses and 10 per cent on merchandise rates on business located above the street level.

A good watchdog in a private home is worth a reduction of 10 per cent. in rates, one company conceded.

Stick to Your Prisoner

BY JACK BECHDOLT

DETECTIVE Sergeant Tom Kearney of the New York City force was a loyal American, but he had one criticism of his native land to offer: there was too much of it.

Born in the shadow of the Brooklyn Bridge, reared on Manhattan Island, Tom Kearney had never before been one hundred miles from the big city.

Now, for the first time, he was seeing America, seeing it from a Pullman car window.

It had taken him five long days to cross the continent from New York to Seattle to take custody of Ray Bridger, a crook of international reputation, head of the gang that had defrauded jewelers and robbed banks and bond houses. This was the second day of Tom's return trip, and three more long, weary days loomed before him.

Much too much of it, Tom thought.

Under other circumstances he might have thought differently of his native land, though probably he never would lose that fierce, insular affection for his home town that the native-born New Yorker acquires in the cradle.

Under other circumstances! But the circumstances of this journey, with Bridger by his side, certainly were not propitious to the acquirement of patriotic pride.

When Tom left New York his Chief addressed him briefly.

"You know who you're going after," said the Chief. "I'm trusting you to bring him back. See that you do."

At that time Tom looked on the long excursion as a hightly desirable joy ride at the expense of the State. He had been working hard that winter, had suffered a long siege of the flu, keeping at his duty nevertheless, and was badly run down in health. He felt that he deserved this respite.

The police in Seattle, where Bridger had been captured as he was about to board a Nippon Yusen Kaisha liner for Yokohama, were explicit about him.

"Bridger is a slippery article," they told Tom. "He's got half a dozen smart jail breaks to his credit and he jumped off a Santa Fe train once in the middle of the Mojave desert. He had leg-irons on him, too! And he got away with that! Look out for him and his gang. They'll be looking for a chance to get him off because this indictment in New York spells twenty years up the river, if they make it stick."

Then they turned Bridger over to Tom's custody.

Bridger was a seemingly slight chap, of rather medium height, half a head under Tom's six feet. A quiet, studious, pleasant-mannered little chap, Tom gazed on him with some astonishment, wondering if the Seattle police hadn't got their prisoners mixed. But the face checked up with the photographs of Ray Bridger right enough.

Tom put his handcuffs on Bridger, got in a taxi and took him to the overland train.

It had been impossible to get a drawing-room for his charge, and as the prosecuting attorney in New York wanted his man at once, Tom had to put up with a section, sleeping beside his man in the lower berth.

"How about these bracelets, Captain?" Bridger suggested the morning of that first day.

"You'll wear them steady," said Tom. "Except for meals you stick to the jewelry."

Bridger sighed with distaste.

"They are so damn conspicuous! Everybody in the car will have me spotted."

Tom shook his head in stern refusal.

"Everybody's going to shy off talking with me as if I had the leprosy!"

"You should have thought of that sooner, my lad! Before you started swindling and robbing!"

Bridger grinned with perfect good nature. "Oh, well," he said resignedly, "you're good company, anyhow. We'll make out pleasantly."

"Anyhow, we'll get there—together," Tom promised.

But he couldn't help getting to like his prisoner during the long day that the train was crossing the Cascades. As Bridger predicted, word went rapidly through the car that Tom was escorting a prisoner. Both men were avoided. They had no companionship except their own. But Bridger had a fund of anecdotes and humor and philosophy that did much to lighten the tedium of travel.

In the midst of his talk and enjoyment Tom kept wishing that the train could quicken its pace, that the time before him was less. He longed to deliver his man safely and be out of the responsibility.

It was after dinner that first night that anybody beside the train conductor and the Pullman conductor had shown interest in the two men, except such interest as shunned them.

A little white-haired old lady who had a section to herself, and who had been chattering and visiting from seat to seat, paused beside Tom and Bridger.

"Mr. Officer?" she began timidly.

"Yes, ma'am?"

"Do you mind if I ask a question of this —gentleman?" she indicated the prisoner timidly.

"Certainly! Anything you like, ma'am."

"I just wondered," she began anxiously, hesitating, "you—you look so much like a relative of mine. Young man, have you folks by the name of Hanley that live in St. Joseph, Missouri?"

Bridger shook his head decidedly. "No, madam. Bridger is my family name, and we all came from Maine."

"It's all right, then," she sighed. "I—I was a big afraid—you see, my sister had a boy who looked mighty like you—or so I thought. Maybe my eyes ain't so good as they used to be. Well, I'm right pleased to know. I'm sorry for you, young man!"

"Sometimes I'm a little sorry for myself," Bridger smiled whimsically.

Tom had observed the various passengers with suspicious eyes. There were at least two men he doubted, and these he discussed with the conductor.

He was relieved to learn that one was a traveling man who made the run regularly. The other left the train at Spokane. He felt easier on the question of any of Bridger's confederates being with them.

Next morning after breakfast and a smoke officer and prisoner sat side by side talking idly. The little old lady of the previous encounter paused again at their seat.

"Mr. Officer, do you mind if I sit down for a chat?"

"Take the facing seat," Tom agreed. "We're glad to have a rest from boring each other."

She had a book under her arm, a kodak picture album.

"Somehow I can't keep my eyes off this young man, him looking so like my sister's boy," she chirped.

"You are very kind," Bridger smiled. "It's nice to see one friendly face, nice for a man in my fix."

"I brought over my snap-shot book," their guest explained. "Pictures of my folks and my kin. I thought it would pass a little time for you all."

Habitual caution prompted Tom to take the book from her hand and glance through it. It contained nothing but kodak prints, mounted on the black leaves—little amateur pictures with names and dates written beneath them in a precise, elderly handwriting. The book was nothing more dangerous than she represented.

Then began a long conversation—rather a monologue, punctured at rare intervals by a remark made for politeness' sake by one or the other of the listeners.

Each picture must be looked at in turn and explained.

The little old guest went into detail, plucking her facts from a vast family tree

confused by many offshoots and branches. Tom Kearney's head reeled. He could stand it no longer and proposed as politely as he could:

"If you don't mind I'll glance over my New York paper while you two chat."

He tried to fix his attention on the five-day-old paper, conscious of the incessant chatter-chatter with its intimate details about Uncle Charley and his untimely demise from pneumonia; Cousin Fred, who went to the Klondike and never was heard of again; Bessie's girl Kate, that painted pictures on silk sofa cushions, and the cute sayings of little Petey, her sister's cousin's child. He was conscious, too, with growing admiration for Bridger, that his prisoner submitted to the interminable lecture with the highest good nature and politeness.

Holy cat! Tom Kearney thought, is this going to keep up all the way to New York? Every day? Sure, I'd rather do a stretch up the river with Bridger than be condemned to three more days of her yawping!

Tom stared out of the window opposite at a landscape of rock and sparse timber, filing past slower now, for the train was climbing a steep mountain grade.

At intervals the electric lights were switched on as they passed through short tunnels. The voice of the wheels spoke with a hollow roar as they spanned giddy trestles, bridging deep ravines.

Tom yawned. His hand automatically patted at the pistol in the holster under his arm. He glanced at Bridger and his little old lady. As she showed each picture their visitor leaned forward to hold the book for the handcuffed man, the eyes behind her steel-framed spectacles gleaming with interest.

"It's a real tidy place," she was running on. "Forty acres cleared and under plow. Brother Jed got it on a trade. Here you can see how the house sets. Right here the land runs off to a bluff, more like a regular cliff just as you see out of the window there. The wagon road into town lies right below that bluff, and Jed—he's a great one for his little joke—he always says if he just had a balloon——"

Tom Kearney groaned inwardly. He thought of proposing to Bridger that they smoke another cigar, but he hated to be rude to a nice little old lady.

The lights flashed up along the Pullmans.

Another tunnel was near. The train was grinding slowly up the grade. Suddenly daylight was eclipsed from the windows.

"Excuse me," said the little old lady, "I've talked myself dry. I'll just get a drink of water." Tom saw her trot down the aisle.

He turned to grin a facetious comment at Bridger.

As he turned the electric lights went out.

The car was in absolute blackness.

Tom Kearney instinctively started to his feet.

It was that move which saved his skull from being crushed by the wicked blow of steel handcuffs delivered by Bridger.

As it was, the blow caught Tom on the jaw, throwing him into the seat, half stunned.

Bridger trampled past him.

It was a minute, perhaps, before Tom rose to his feet and raced down the aisle after Bridger.

He had a flashlight in his pocket, and his finger snapped its switch. The ray caught Bridger stooping in the car vestibule and tugging at the trap that closes the train steps.

Then an excited passenger collided with Tom, and there was an exchange of oaths between them.

When the detective reached the vestibule Bridger had gone. The trap was open. The train door swung inward.

With no other thought than getting his man Tom swung himself off the steps into the blackness of the tunnel. He fell flat and remained motionless while the train passed him, its swaying coaches missing his head by scant inches as he crowded against the tunnel wall.

The roar of the train died away, though the air still was choking with gases and the cinders showered down.

It was black as death itself.

Tom rose dizzily and shot the ray of his flashlight across the darkness.

Instantly the tunnel rang with the deaf-

ening explosion of a pistol. The flash dropped from Tom's hand. He leaped to one side, thankful he had held the light far from his body.

He stood motionless a few seconds. Then, planting one foot before the other as cautiously as a cat, he changed his position and stood listening.

He reached to the holster for his pistol. It was gone.

Bridger had got it as he crowded past him in the train!

Tom remained still, his mind working fast. He was in a tight hole, but he hadn't separated from Bridger yet.

The detective saw plainly how he had been tricked. That woman, that garrulous, innocent old lady with her steel-rimmed spectacles and her book of snapshots, she had done it! She had passed Bridger the key that unlocked his handcuffs while she chattered about the pictures. She, no doubt, had cut the electric light wiring while she pretended to be getting a drink of water. The escape had been cleverly planned by desperate people.

The next thing was to locate Bridger in that Stygian blackness, to locate him without giving his own position away and becoming a target for Bridger's shooting.

The tunnel was silent now except for a faint trickle of water. Tom scarcely dared breathe and Bridger must have been equally cautious.

The officer stooped and picked up a handful of clinkers from the track. He tossed one, then several, gently to his right. They rattled noisily as they fell. His quick ear caught the faint whisper of a footfall. Bridger was stirring.

Tom shifted his own position toward the direction of that whispering footfall, tossing more clinkers off to the right to cover his approach. Bridger was somewhere not far off, he knew that.

His fingers found a larger lump and he shied it closer to the spot he fancied his man occupied. Bridger's nerves betrayed him. He fired at the sound, and Tom leaped toward the betraying pistol flash.

Their bodies collided and went rolling, interlocked, upon the ties. Tom Kearney was on top and doing some wicked work with his bare fists The form beneath him heaved upward suddenly and the two men went rolling again, their arms flailing.

A raucous scream filled the tunnel, almost bursting their ear drums. A blinding light swept around the bend of the mountain bore and the earth rocked.

A freight, following the overland through the single track mountain block, was speeding along, hauling empties eastward.

The instinct of self-preservation parted the combatants. Together they leaped from the track, crouching against the tunnel's rock wall, crouching low and hugging the rock, praying that their bodies would clear the swaying empties that sped roaring past.

The impact of this torrent of sound seemed to drive the breath from Tom's body. His senses reeled with it. The train of empties seemed never coming to an end.

Bridger's leg, thrust between his own suddenly, tripped him.

Bridger's fist caught his shoulders and shoved them forward directly against the rocking cars.

Tom Kearney was struck a stunning blow by some projection of the passing coaches. The world flared up in one great conflagration before his eyes, he reeled and seemed to sink into a bottomless abyss.

He opened his eyes, conscious of great pain, conscious of being in blackness and silence.

As he felt his body tenderly, locating what appeared to be a twisted shoulder and broken ribs, the faint echo of a train whistle drifted to his ears and he remembered.

Bridger!

Bridger was gone!

Tom Kearney staggered upright. He started off down the track, not knowing in which direction his face turned.

He stumbled upon the uneven ties as he went, trying to hasten his pace.

Why had the overland not stopped?

Surely passengers and train crew knew that his man had escaped!

Tom pressed both hands to his aching head, staggering on, puzzling out the an-

swer. The freight! That was it. They were on a single track, mountain division. Trains moved from block to block. The overland, followed closely by the train of empties, had gone on to the end of the block without risking a halt among the deep mountain cuts and blind curves.

It didn't matter, really! Nothing mattered except he had to stick to Bridger!

The darkness turned gray before him. The tunnel mouth showed a little luminous disk that widened out as he broke into a run.

Ahead, in the sunlight, the tracks stretched and Tom, pausing in the shadow of the tunnel mouth to look, saw fully a quarter of a mile away the figure of a man. That it was Bridger he never doubted.

The man, turning off the railroad track, climbing a bank of rock to the left of it.

His figure stood clearly outlined against the sky for a moment, then vanished over the ridge of rock.

Tom started toward that spot at a run. He pelted across a trestle, dimly conscious of the giddy height, of the roar of a mountain stream and terrifying glimpses of a deep abyss beneath the open ties.

To the left the land dropped off in a cliff.

Across the trestle, Tom paused to survey the lay of the country.

The cliff dropped sheer at his left hand and extended unbroken as far as where Bridger had turned off the tracks. There a rough, broken slope or abutment jutted out. It was plain to see there was some sort of a trail at this point leading downward. Leading to what?

He looked below.

A ribbon of road, well-made country road, followed the foot of the cliff. Objects were plain in the clear mountain air. Tom Kearney saw, not far below where Bridger had turned onto the trail, a small automobile drawn beside the road—waiting, no doubt.

There was a man in the car and his face was turned upward, looking toward the trail.

Tom Kearney realized fully then that he had more than one desperate man to deal with. Bridger had help. The whole escape had been planned.

With certain grim admiration for his prisoner, Tom realized the maneuver must have been thought out long in advance, even while Bridger waited extradition at Seattle. The spot was known—an accomplice ready with the car. Another accomplice on the train to let Bridger know the details of the plan—the old lady, of course.

Now he recalled something else, the old lady's rambling story about Brother Jed's farm, with the cliff and the road beneath the cliff. She had told Bridger before his face. What had sounded like her infernal innocent chatter was the whole plan, given for the prisoner's guidance.

Tom groaned aloud. By no possibility could he reach the spot where the trail turned off in time to overtake Bridger. He was unarmed, beside.

He was conscious of blood on his face, of a shoulder almost useless with bruises—perhaps a dislocation—of racking pain from a broken rib at every breath he drew. A fine match he would be for an armed and desperate pair of crooks.

"I'm trusting you to bring him back," the Chief said.

Tom ran toward the trail. Near that spot he saw what might be a chance, provided he cared to take long chances.

He reached the cliff edge almost above where the automobile was waiting, but concealed from it by a thick growth of pines and cedar.

The trees, rooted among rock slides, climbed the gentler slope, reaching their thickly matted foliage near to the cliff top here.

The sheer drop was not more than twenty-five or thirty feet. What perils of rock and slide lay beneath that mat of thick cedar and pine foliage he could not see. But this was the quick way down—quick and dangerous.

Tom Kearney thought of his police gymnasium work, of scaling ladders, wall climbing and field day stunts with gratitude.

Stiff and sore and giddy still from his mauling in the tunnel, he launched himself toward that matted mattress of thick, thatched branches without giving time to consider consequences. There was just one

consequence of importance, that was the fear of losing his man.

The treetops received him with a crash. The thrashing branches held him, then let him drop farther into the tangle, lacerating his flesh, dizzying him, stunning him.

It was like being tossed in a blanket held by giants.

Tom brought up dangling across a bending bow, and when his vision cleared found the earth not eight feet below him. He swung down and began to crawl stealthily toward the road, wondering if any miracle had prevented the driver of the waiting car from hearing his fall.

The car's siren was going in short, repeated yelps, guiding Bridger down the trail. It served to guide Tom also and to cover the crash of his adventure in the treetops.

Tom Kearney came out of cover behind the car. The driver was still working his siren, his face turned toward the trail. Tom saw that he was a stocky little chap, a typical city type, a crooked chauffeur, the accomplice, no doubt, of many such exploits. Hard boiled—that described him.

On hands and knees Tom crawled around the car, praying he could find a rock, a club, something that would serve as a weapon. A glint of metal from the rear seat caught his eye. He reached in with beating heart and captured—a wrench. Just a small nickel wrench. It would do.

Tom swung himself into the rear of the car behind the driver. Before that individual had time to turn his head something cold was pressed hard against the base of his bullet skull.

"One move—or one yip out of you—and you're through!" Tom whispered huskily in his ear.

The head turned far enough for a glance, a glance that showed that stocky little crook the gleam of a nickeled weapon and a face he dreamed about for years after—a blood-streaked, dirt-matted face with gleaming eyes.

"Stick 'em up!" Tom whispered, and the driver's hands rose. Tom's right hand reached over his shoulder and made a search that netted him a real weapon to increase his arsenal.

A robe lay in the bottom of the car. Tom jerked it over him, crouching low.

"Now," he directed, enforcing the words with a prod of the driver's revolver against that tingling spine, "if you want to live long enough to kiss your folks good-by, you do what I say. Bridger is coming. Let him in the car. Drive to wherever you're going, and do it quick. And one word—one hint—one sidewise look out of you and I'll plant lead in you both and let the undertaker ship you back to New York!"

There was a shout from the rocky bank on the heels of his warning. Bridger emerged from the timber, running. He leaped into the car beside the driver without a word and with scarcely a glance at the heaped robe in the rear. That robe might have been tossed over suit-cases for all Bridger knew.

Tom silently flung the robe aside as soon as Bridger was seated. Gripping the revolver, he rose to his feet behind the fugitive and, suddenly jamming the gun against Bridger's head, roared:

"Put 'em up, Bridger!"

The startled crook hastily obeyed, and Tom reached over with his disengaged hand and got his gun as a curse ripped from Bridger's lips.

With a gun in each hand aimed at the heads of the two men, the detective said to the chauffeur:

"Now start! Drive like the devil, too!"

He felt his strength slipping, and, fearing a collapse, he wanted to get to the nearest town in a hurry to secure his prisoners.

Both crooks saw the guns, and knew the detective would shoot at the slightest provocation. They therefore kept quiet and obeyed orders.

The engine was running. The chunky driver let in his gears and the car leaped away.

They went roaring down the mountain grade, taking the wicked turns on two wheels. Timber and rock, culverts, embankments and warning signals flashed by. Tom had a hard job steadying himself and

had to hang on to the back of a seat with one hand.

"The town of Richmond can't be far!" Tom considered prayerfully. "If it isn't too far off I'll be able to smother this faintness and hold out."

He could count on shooting one man. If it had to be, he would give Bridger the lead in case he found his senses leaving.

They roared past one house. Another house came into view—a glimpse of a straggling street.

The chauffeur stepped on the gas. He meant to race through the town.

"Stop here!" Tom roared.

The car brakes screamed and it skidded crazily through the dust and rubble of the road.

A man came running from a country store with others at his heels. They circled about the strange tableau.

"Seize these men!" Tom croaked hoarsely. "Prisoners escaping. They have no guns. Get rope and hog-tie them. I'm Tom Kearney—New York police—I——"

He toppled over, the warning unfinished, just as the sheriff of Richmond snapped bracelets on the two crooks.

Tom had done all he was capable of. He had stuck to his prisoner, and the crook was safe in the hands of the law.

TRUTH SERUM

THREE negroes, two men and a woman, went to trial in Criminal Circuit Court, at Birmingham, Ala., charged with the murder of John R. Turner, white, on Jan. 6, 1923. Turner's skull was fractured by blows from a blunt instrument, believed by police authorities to have been an ax. His body was found in a negro residential section lying beside a negro woman, Lilly Bell, unconscious from injuries about the head caused by a similar weapon.

Evidence to be brought out at this trial is expected by authorities to clear many of the ax assault mysteries which have startled Birmingham for four years, twenty-three charged in the Turner case and assault with fatalities resulting from forty-four attacks. Two indictments were returned against each defendant. Murder in the first degree is intent to murder in the case of Lilly Bell.

Records at the Court House show capiases on these indictments were served Dec. 19, 1923, a few hours before these negroes and two others, Fred Glover and Rufus Anthony, were given alleged "truth serum" injections. County Solicitor Davis stated positively that any statements which might have been obtained from the negroes while they were under influence of a scopolamine solution were not used in obtaining their indictment.

Peyton Johnson, alias Foots Johnson, one of those indicted, thus described his treatment:

"They took me from the City Jail to the County. When we were entered on the docket, the men told us to go downstairs. This was about 9 or 10 o'clock the Wednesday night before Christmas (Dec. 19). A tall man wearing specs, dressed in a gray pinchback suit, told me to take off my shirt and get ready for vacination. I told him I had been vaccinated thirty years ago (Johnson is fifty-five). He said 'Never mind,' and I did what he said. He used a syringe needle and stuck me in the right arm.

"I began to feel dizzy like when I was drunk. Then he gave me a shot in the left arm. I was asked what time it was. I heard the clock strike 10 and told them it must be about 10 o'clock. They said it was 10.27. That was the last I knew until next morning, when I woke up feeling dizzy and sick. My heart hurt and I couldn't get my breath right."

Johnson didn't remember, he said, any questions about the ax murders and denied knowledge of any such crime. He signed nothing, he declared.

The String

BY CRITTENDEN MARRIOTT

WHEN the Chief of the customs agents of the United States stationed in Europe got the news, he picked up the telephone in his London office and called his representative in Liverpool.

"Dixon!" he yelled, when the girl had at last made the connection—"Dixon! Cresson is at it again. Two months ago that smuggler contracted with a man in New York to get and deliver the Canopic pearls to him for $250,000. He bought them for $20,000 and stands to clean up the odd $50,000 if he can smuggle them into the United States, and to lose a lot more than that if he had to pay duties. I've just learned that he sails for America on the *Staxon* at five o'clock this afternoon. Of course he's taking the pearls. He's made monkeys of us often enough, and it's got to stop. You jump on board that boat and catch him red-handed, understand! You know him, and it ought to be easy."

"All right, Chief; I'll catch him," promised Dixon comfortably. Dixon always did take things comfortably.

The Chief didn't. He always wanted enthusiasm and always took umbrage at lack of it in others.

"You bet you will!" he yelled. "You catch him or stay on the other side, 'y understand?"

"Sure, Chief, I understand. I'll catch him." Dixon's voice was as soothing as a mother's to a sick baby.

But it did not soothe the Chief.

"Aw—you—you go to—to New York!" he rasped, and slapped the telephone back on the hook.

Dixon waited till he was sure the Chief had gone, then he looked at his watch.

"Two hours," he commented. "Plenty of time." Calmly he set about packing his bag.

An hour and a half later he went on board the *Staxon*, took possession of his stateroom, and set about making himself comfortable for the voyage. He did not look for Cresson. He did not have to; he had seen him lolling over the rail as he came up the gangway and had returned his greeting. He and Cresson were old enemies. Besides, he had been able to get a stateroom two doors from that assigned to the suspect.

For seven days nothing happened. The *Staxon* was a seven-and-a-half-day boat, and Inspector Dixon did not expect anything to happen for at least six days. But at noon on the sixth day, when he paid his daily visit to the purser's office, he learned that Cresson had just filed his declaration for the customs officers in New York.

"He hasn't declared the pearls," said the purser, who was always ready to help the customs people. "He either hasn't got them or he means to smuggle them. Nervy cuss, isn't he?"

Dixon nodded. "Clever, too," he answered. "Knows every point in the game, and how to meet it. But he's up against it this time. Er—do you know what time we'll pass the three-mile limit?"

"About ten o'clock in the morning. I'll let you know the exact minute as soon as I can. Pretty important, isn't it?"

"Rather!" Dixon nodded, and turned away.

It was important. The moment the ship crossed the three-mile line it came within the jurisdiction of the United States, and Dixon, as a customs inspector, could ex-

amine Cresson's baggage and could seize the undeclared pearls if he found them, and could arrest the man. If he did not find them he could take such steps as seemed best to him.

Needness to say he did not expect to find them easily. Trust Cresson for having some new scheme to prevent that! He would need all the time he had between crossing the line and docking to find them. But until he did cross the line he could do nothing—unless in the interval the smuggler made some unexpected move.

Cresson did make an unexpected move. That night, before the moon rose, and while the stars were still veiled by mist, a yell of "Man overboard!" startled the few passengers who were still on deck.

The lookout who had given the alarm promptly hurled a couple of life preservers (fitted with flares that would soon ignite) into the sea. The big searchlight of the vessel began to sweep the surface of the waters. The ship began to make a circuit. Passengers crowded to the decks. The lookout told the executive officer (and Dixon) that a man had darted out of a stateroom and had cast himself overboard. The ship completed its circuit and started back to the flares, now barely visible in the distance. When it reached them boats dropped and began to quarter the sea.

Nothing was found to indicate that the would-be suicide was still on the top of the water. "Probably carried a weight to take him straight down," decided the captain, and started again on his interrupted voyage.

A little later Dixon, accompanied by the executive officer and the room steward, searched Cresson's stateroom. Dixon was certain that the crook would not be found, and he was equally certain that Cresson had not gone overboard, even though a cursory search of the ship had failed to reveal him.

On the table in the room a letter was found that showed at least that it was Cresson who had caused the alarm. It was addressed to a woman in Chicago, and when opened was found to be very brief: "Darling, the game's up. They're bound to get me tomorrow. So I won't wait. Good-by —David."

Dixon paid little attention to the letter. He had been looking more or less confidently for something to happen, and this was it. Cresson, he believed, was still on board, hiding or disguised—with the pearls in his possession. Unless prevented, he would get ashore with them somehow on the next day. Therefore he must be prevented.

But how? Beyond a doubt his plans had been worked out carefully, checked and rechecked to the last detail. His disguise or his hiding-place, or both, were ready. A ship the size of the *Staxon* has a hundred places where a man could defy discovery, except by sheer chance, by anything short of a thorough search; and there could be no possibility of making a thorough search so long as a thousand passengers were on board, even if time were available. Until the passengers went ashore Cresson would be safe. His plan, therefore, was probably to go ashore with the other passengers. If he failed in this he would probably be found, sooner or later, either on shipboard or at Ellis Island with the immigrants.

Yes, he would try to go ashore with the cabin passengers. And he must be caught then.

But how? How was a man, a master of disguise, to be picked out from a line of passengers, all in a hurry to get ashore, all resentful of the least suggestion of search? Cresson might get through as a woman; he had the necessary physique. How could one dare to search a woman, who might turn out to be the wife of a United States Senator or of a millionaire? One must be very sure of one's ground first. And one could not be sure of his ground until one had searched.

There was but one way. The cabin passengers could be required to show their passports and permit comparison of the photographs with their faces and their names with the passenger list as they went over the side. Those who could not or would not submit would focus attention on themselves and could be held for examination.

Theoretically this would cause Cresson's discovery if he tried to run the gauntlet and would keep him on board if he did not try

it. Practically, however, Dixon had little hope for its success. Cresson was thoroughly familiar with the possibilities and and no doubt considered this danger and arranged to meet it. It could be tried; it must be tried; but——

Dixon refused to trust to it. He must, he told himself, find some other way or some additional means that would strengthen a mere inspection.

He harked back to first principles. He had always held that every criminal plan had at least one weak spot and that every criminal made at least one error in carrying it out. Cresson's plan, therefore, was faulty somewhere, either in detail or in execution. The place to seek for the fault was this stateroom, where Cresson had put it into execution.

He must find it.

All this had passed through Dixon's mind in a few seconds. He had not needed to think it all out then and there. He had merely to marshal facts and arguments that he had done in other cases hundreds of times before. By the time that the executive officer had finished his study of Cresson's letter Dixon had begun to search the stateroom.

Carefully, minutely, he sought, examining floors, walls, beds, the lounge, the chest of drawers, luggage—everything. He found nothing.

The executive officer had grown tired of watching him. Moreover, the stateroom had grown close from the lack of ventilation due to the closing of the door to keep out the curious. He turned to the steward.

"Open the port," he directed.

The man stepped up on the lounge and was fumbling with the fastenings of the big glass bull's-eye when Dixon sprang up beside him.

"Wait a minute," he said. "Let me look first." He began to finger the glass and the brass rim.

"Nothin' there, sir," said the steward.

"No——! Perhaps not—— What's that string doing there?" Dixon pointed to a minute end of string, scarcely a quarter of an inch long, that projected from between the brass rim and the casing.

The steward concealed a smile. "Just a bit of string, sir," he said. "Caught there somehow."

"Yes! But why didn't it fall out when the port was opened?"

"Stuck to the brass, I fancy, sir."

"Let's see! Wait a minute." Dixon scrutinized the lounge on which he stood and the adjacent floor. Then he jumped down, picked up about two inches of string from the floor, and jumped back.

"Same sort of string," he commented, comparing the fragment with the projecting end. "Both seem to have been cut with a sharp knife. Why?" Forward he leaned and pressed his finger tip carefully on the projection end. "Open the port carefully, steward," he directed. "Don't knock my hand loose."

The steward obeyed. Then he uttered an exclamation.

The string led out to the edge of the opening and then dropped away. Keeping his finger firmly on its end to prevent its falling and being utterly lost, Dixon reached out with his left hand, grasped it and drew it easily up and in.

Nothing was attached to it. It was string and nothing more—about ten feet long, with its lower end frayed by whipping in the wind. If Dixon drew any inference from it, he kept it to himself.

"Water-haul," commented the executive officer. "No fish on that line. Still"—his tone grew meditative—"it's queer that it should be there. Looks as if somebody had planted it there and then cut off the inner end to keep any one from noticing until they opened the port—and then they wouldn't notice it, for the wind would blow it away before they could."

Dixon nodded. "Looks that way, doesn't it?" he commented quietly, as he stuffed the string into his pocket. "By the way, Mr. Mahoney, could you issue a notice saying that all cabin passengers will have to check out by their passports as they pass down the gangplank to the dock tomorrow?"

Mahoney hesitated. "Why—er—I suppose I could. But I'd rather you saw the captain about it."

"All right! I will! Er—I guess this is about all we can do here, except— Would you mind directing that this stateroom be kept locked until everybody is on shore tomorrow?"

"Why, no! Not at all! That's an order, steward!"

Dixon went straight to the captain's cabin and laid the case before him—with reasons for his request. He had to use some persuasion, but he carried his point at last, on the condition that the customs service should take all responsibility. Thus it was that early the next morning all the bulletin boards informed the cabin passengers that "at the request" of the customs service the usual landing cards would not be used and that instead passports would be shown at the gangway by passengers going ashore.

Dixon, circulating among the passengers, heard no protests and almost no comments on the change. The passengers seemed to take the order as part of the routine procedure.

Later, when the actual landing began, some grumbling occurred among the usual small percentage of passengers who wished to rush away the instant the gangplank was in place. However, the admonition, constantly repeated by stewards passing along the line, to "have your passports ready" was quickly heeded and the protests died away. The line moved almost as quickly as if the usual cards had been used.

Dixon stood at the head of the gangway, flanked by a ship's officer on the one hand and by a brother customs inspector on the other. The ship's officer took the passports, opened them and passed them on to Dixon, who checked the names by the stateroom list. Then he passed them on to the other inspector (who had come on board at Quarantine), who examined the passport photographs and incidentally the faces of their owners. This last was not altogether a form; the New York officials, notified by wireless, had sent a man who knew Cresson to help on the job. The real responsibility, however, lay with Dixon.

Passenger after passenger went by, unchallenged, down the gangplank, until the end of the "rush" section came into sight. The rest of the passengers would come, singly or in groups, but would certainly come in fewer numbers. Dixon, for probably the first time in his life, had difficulty in maintaining his customary calmness; he felt sure that Cresson would appear somewhere in the remainder of the first section.

One by one the passengers came—and passed on. At last there appeared a woman, probably of middle age, but blooming with natural color. "Miss Wright," she explained, as she handed her passport to the ship's officer, then nodded and smiled at Dixon.

Dixon smiled back. He took the passport and bent to check the name against the stateroom list. His pencil running down the W— names paused inperceptibly as he saw the number that was attached to "Miss Wright"; then went on calmly as ever to the bottom. Shaking his head, he returned to the top of the Ws and went down again. This time he stopped and placed the proper check.

Then slowly he raised his head and looked "Miss Wright" in the eyes. "The game's up, Cresson," he said quietly. "I'll take those pearls, please."

Cresson made no defense. Somewhat wryly he smiled.

"You win, Dixon," he said. "Here they are!" He put his right hand into his pocket and brought it out, holding a wonderful-looking necklace. Then, as Dixon reached to take it, he flung it over the rail.

Dixon made no attempt to intercept it. Instantly he flung himself on Cresson, clapped a pair of handcuffs on his wrists, and spun him into the willing arms of the officer behind. "Hold him tight, please," he said calmly. "You see, Cresson," he went on, "I was laying for you. When you pulled that suicide stunt by heaving a weighted dummy overboard, I knew you had a trick up your sleeve and was waiting for you to play it. Assuming two characters was clever, but it didn't get you anywhere."

Cresson did not resist. Apparently he either considered that honors were even and

that in default of the pearls he would go free, or that resistance was useless.

"Sorry to sting you, Dixon," he said, "especially after you worked so hard. How'd you nail me?"

Dixon met his eyes placidly.

"The string from your port betrayed you, Cresson," he answered readily. "It was too short to reach to any other port except the one immediately beneath that listed as Miss Wright's. You used it, of course, to lower the pearls so that they would not be found, even if both your staterooms, one above the other, should be searched. But when you disappeared as Cresson and assumed the rôle of Miss Wright you probably detached the pearls from the string and hid them on your person. It was a small slip, Cresson, but it'll send you up to Leavenworth. Pity to sting you after you'd paid for two staterooms!"

Cresson grinned.

"How'll you get those pearls back from the bottom of the North River?" he observed.

"Oh, yes! The pearls! I'd almost forgotten them——"

Dixon broke off as the steward, who had helped him in Cresson's cabin the night before, came running up the gangplank, waving the necklace in his hand.

"I've got 'em!" he cried. "They 'most fell into the strip of water between the ship and the dock. I grabbed 'em just in time."

"Good!" replied Dixon smilingly. "But I'm afraid those are not the real pearls. Cresson wouldn't have given up the fight so readily as all that! Would you, Cresson?"

Without waiting for an answer he plunged his hand into Cresson's voluminous feminine robes, and a moment later drew it forth with a jewel case. "I think we shall find them in this," he said, as he opened it.

And it held the pearls.

MENTAL CURE FAKERS

MEDICAL quacks and fake "cure all" physicians do not confine themselves to the field of physical treatments alone, but are also appearing under the guise of psychologists, with attractively advertised cures for mental troubles, according to the current *Medical Hygiene Bulletin*, published by the National Committee for Mental Hygiene.

The article calls attention to several groups who have entered the field that has been opened up by the popularizing of psychoanalysis and the widespread publicity given to various phases of mental diseases. The first group comprises lecturers who are going about the country organizing classes and advertising "self-improvement" courses in the name of psychology.

Many of these self-styled "psychologists," according to the bulletin, are capitalizing public credulity and are taking unfair advantage of what is often an honest desire to know something about psychology.

"The second group," the article continues, "consists of those correspondence courses that make extravagant claims for developing the mind and will. These courses, whose charges run from $30 to $100, are alleged to be doing a land-office business.

"Then there are special book publishers who write and issue sets of books ranging in price from $10 to $30 and a number of magazines purporting to discuss psychological subjects, which have a wide circulation."

The article concludes that reputable psychologists may either let the flame of quackery die a natural death or may seek to quench it, "accepting the situation as a challenge." In some instances it is possible, according to the bulletin, that no active harm may result from these mental "treatments."

"But when a false sense of security postpones needed medical or psychiatric treatment, disaster is sure to follow.

"The Shades" Mystery

By DR. W. J. CAMPBELL

THE telephone on Chief Hale's desk jingled loudly, interrupting his conversation with Assistant Thomas. The officer jerked the receiver from the hook and applied it to his ear.

Over the wire came the following:

"If Chief Hale will come to 1021 South Harrison Street, he will learn of one of the most heinous crimes ever committed in this city. And not only that, but he will be enabled to apprehend the criminal."

And the instrument at the other end of the line clicked.

Hale frantically called Central. But they didn't know the party who had called. Slamming the receiver on the hook, he seized a city directory while hurriedly informing his assistant of the strange message he had just received.

Feverishly the two officers racked their brains for somebody's address whom they knew in the vicinity of that number. At last they had it, the chubby finger of the Chief pausing at the name, Dr. Ross Craig, Physician and Surgeon, 1021 South Harrison Street.

Grabbing his hat from a convenient hook, he signaled Assistant Thomas to do the same, and the two men darted toward the door.

In a moment they were in the police automobile and rushing for the doctor's office.

Doctor Craig met them at the door—a tall, slender man, clean shaven, with coal-black hair slightly mixed with gray, his deep-set eyes, black and piercing. All in all, he was a man who would command your second glance.

"You are very prompt, gentlemen," he said, leading the way into his private office.

Seated at a table, the man of medicine set a box of cigars before the officers.

"Try one of them, gentlemen," he invited. "I enjoy a cigar occasionally, but prefer my old briarwood."

Hale and Thomas selected cigars and as the Chief applied the match he inquired:

"But how about that crime, doctor, or was it you called me over the phone? It seems to me we are losing valuable time here smoking cigars. Rather loafing on the job, I take it."

Doctor Craig smiled.

"Yes, it was I who called you, Mr. Hale," he replied. "But I assure you there is no immediate hurry," and he glanced at the clock. Then, calmly seating himself opposite the two men, he continued: "It is now half-past eight. At a quarter of nine we must be on the road to the scene of the tragedy. At that place you shall meet the criminal. Once there I must be permitted to have charge of the affair until I see fit to turn it over to you. Have I your consent?" And as both men nodded he went on: "Very well, then, that matter is settled. Meantime, while waiting for the time to leave, I shall tell you a short story.

"I take it for granted you are both acquainted with Blair Holmes, who lives in retirement at 'The Shades,' a beautiful suburban home. Mr. Holmes is a man of very retiring disposition, hence but little of his private life is known. He is reputed to be a man of considerable wealth, and quite a few stories are in circulation of his magnificent gifts to worthy causes. The history of his life before coming to this town is unknown.

"I have been to 'The Shades' some four or five times, either to administer to him or one of his servants. He has two, an aged man and his wife. In our brief conversations during these visits I found Holmes to

be a quiet, unassuming man, finely educated.

"At exactly four o'clock this afternoon I was in his home. Jenkins, the old man servant, called my office, stating that his master had suddenly been taken ill. Gentlemen, while there I made a most astounding discovery. I assure you I was never more rational in my life than I was in that sick room with two old servants hovering near.

"It was only a few days since I saw Blair Holmes on the street in his automobile. Yet I swear to you he has been dead for several months."

Chief Hale blew a cloud of smoke toward the ceiling.

"Say, doctor, that is rather a strange statement to make—a man dead yet alive, or a man alive yet dead. I have seen Holmes within the week myself, yet you make the assertion that he has been dead for months while admitting you went to call on him this afternoon. I don't understand you."

Dr. Craig glanced at the clock before replying.

"The time draws near when all shall be explained," he said. "In a few minutes we must start."

It was just fifteen minutes of nine when the silent party of three entered the police car and were rapidly whirled away.

The doctor snapped his watch open as they passed under the last street lamp. It was just ten minutes of nine. They were making excellent time.

With the motor purring quietly they turned into the lane leading to "The Shades." Presently the lamps of the car picked up a low, rambling structure in front of them and Hale, who was driving, brought the machine to a stop at a side entrance.

As the men dismounted a dim light was noted burning at the rear of the building.

"Our destination is reached, but what shall the next few moments bring forth?" silently breathed the doctor as the three men stepped upon the porch.

The door was opened by an aged, stoop-shouldered man, who peered out into the night.

Doctor Craig stepped briskly forward.

"It is I, Doctor Craig, Jenkins," he said pleasantly. "These gentlemen are friends of mine who came along upon my invitation. I told you this afternoon I would return at nine o'clock. Listen, some clock in the city is striking the hour."

"You are very punctual," replied the old man. "The patient as yet sleeps soundly. But come in, gentlemen; I will conduct you to his room," and Jenkins, closing the door, went tottering down the hall. "My wife has just laid down for a rest, doctor," he said, ushering them into a chamber where a shaded light was burning.

"Very well, Jenkins, you may go now," said Doctor Craig. "I'll call you later," and he softly closed the door behind the old servant.

In an opposite corner of the chamber stood a massive bed. The three men crossed the room and stood gazing down at the sleeping man reclining upon it.

"Why, Doctor Craig, this is Blair Holmes lying here, and he isn't dead," whispered Chief Hale in the doctor's ear.

The physician did not reply, but merely motioned for the two officers to be seated. Opening his medicine-case, he proceeded to fill a hypodermic syringe with a solution, after which he stooped over the prostrate figure, bared the left arm, inserted the needle and shot a few drops under the skin. Then he carefully replaced the instrument in his case and quietly sat down by the bedside.

Slowly the moments ticked away. Possibly five of them had passed when the sleeping man drew a long breath and rolled to another posture. Another minute and there was a twitching of the facial muscles and the eyes fluttered open.

Wonderingly he gazed at those seated around him. Then, as consciousness returned, he said:

"Doctor Craig, I know you. Have I been asleep? It seems like a dream. I remember now being very sick. When did you come, and why are these men with you?"

Doctor Craig hitched his chair closer to the patient.

"You have been a pretty sick man,

Holmes. I came to see you this afternoon, found your fever high, and you in a delirium. I administered an opiate, and after a time you slept. These gentlemen are friends of mine and came at my request. One of them will remain here with you."

"I don't understand," replied the man.

"You will after I relate a little story for your benefit," replied the doctor, leaning forward and placing one hand on the bed. "Kindly refrain from interrupting me until I am through.

"This afternoon I talked by long-distance telephone to an old gentleman by the name of Milton, in a town located in one of our sister States. It was the old home town of a certain youth a good many years ago. This old man told me the boy had been left an orphan just at the age of manhood.

"There was a considerable sum of money, and this boy, being wild and reckless, required the services of a guardian, and Milton was appointed. Every penny the young fellow obtained was spent in riotous living.

"He was the boon companion of the rough element of the town. Eventually he became implicated in some escapades which caused him to flee the country.

"Nothing was heard of him for quite a long time, and then a letter came from far-away India. He was in business there, had changed his manner of living and needed some ready money. Letters of reference were inclosed, which afterward proved to be forgeries.

"Money was sent him, the bulk of his remaining fortune. Twenty years rolled past, and he returned, a man past middle age and practically unknown. But there remained one who knew him. I refer to Milton, his old guardian, now well past three-score-and-ten.

"This wanderer, who had lived by his wits, a crook by nature, a murderer at heart as well as in deed, has come to a final reckoning, so to speak."

"That is a splendid little story, doctor, but will you kindly state its connection with the present occasion," and the man in the bed made a sorry attempt to smile.

"In course of time this human monster sneaked into a home and there committed the most heinous of crimes, murder—murder of an innocent human being, one who would have sacrificed his all in this world to have known that this scoundrel had reformed. Cain slew his own flesh and blood, and this devil followed in his footsteps."

"It's a lie," cried Holmes, his knotted hands held shakingly before his eyes.

"Silence!" grated the physician between his clenched teeth. "Will you keep quiet? This tragedy isn't completed yet. There is another act to it, and then the final curtain. Let me explain.

"After this monster had killed his victim, by some secret poison it is presumed, a poison which he had used in India or other parts of the world, he stealthily removed the body and placed it in a tomb, which the murdered man had erected a few years before.

"What was the purpose? Money, an easy time, a continuous round of wicked pleasure. For a while he lived the quiet life of the slain one to avert suspicion. For a time this farce has been carried on. But sickness laid its hand on the murderer, more mental than physical. It laid him low, and in the hours of his delirium he enacted the whole scene over and over—the witnesses, two shocked old servants and the attending physician, myself, who has since verified every word spoken by this delirious patient."

The sick man uttered a curse, and made as if he would rise from the bed, but was forced back by Chief Hale, who had risen to his feet and stood leaning partly over it.

Doctor Craig drew his tall form to its fullest height, pointed an accusing finger at the now silent figure and hissed out:

"Jack Holmes, I charge you with having slain your twin brother, Blair Holmes, concealing his body in his tomb, where it now lies, and fostering yourself upon the public as Blair."

There was no reply from the bed. The doctor leaned over it, and then, raising his head, said quietly:

"Chief, a part of my contract with you over the phone can never be filled, for this murderer has gone before the Judge of a higher court."

Trapped by Chance

By JOE BURKE

PART ONE

WITH a tiger-like roar, followed by an oath, Chief Mullaly savagely crushed a telegram in his pudgy hand. His florid face turned a grayish hue and slowly contracted into hard, grim lines.

"Send Mooney to me," he barked, his heavy voice startling Dick Burge, the Headquarters' clerk, so that he nearly swallowed a big black cigar that he was smoking. Without turning to learn the cause of the human eruption, Burge kicked his chair clear and rushed into the next room.

"Read that!" snapped the Chief, as the big detective stood at attention before his desk.

Mooney took the crumpled yellow paper from the fat hand, smoothed it out and read:

CHIEF OF DETECTIVES,
Headquarters, Boston, Mass.

Two detectives detailed by you to bring back Clay Willok, as per authority of extradition, nearly killed by prisoner, who escaped. Prisoner in mountain stronghold, impossible to dislodge him without loss of life. Knows country and is dead shot. More information by letter.

(Signed) SHERIFF TEEL,
Cooks County, Kentucky.

"Gee!" ejaculated the detective, the tragic message fluttering to the floor. "Shine and Nolan—nearly dead."

His steel-gray eyes were cold and deadly as he looked down on the upturned face of his Chief.

For several moments neither man spoke. When Mullaly did his voice was strained and hoarse:

"Yes, Tom; that seems to be the drift of it—don't it? And to think"—he sprang erect, his face purple and eyes ablaze—"those yaps say they can't dislodge him—eh? And he's a dead shot. The crook nearly killed two of my best men, and, by Heaven, it'll only take one *good* man to get him, and that's you. Yes, you, Tom; you're going after that killer and bring him back."

The Chief's voice broke as he lowered himself into his chair.

Stoical through the vehement outburst, Detective Mooney's heels clicked together and his hand shot to his forehead in salute.

"When do I start, sir?" he asked quietly.

"Right away, Tom; right away," cried the Chief. "I knew you'd go. I'll wire the sheriff that you're headed that way, and while you're throwing a few things into a grip I'll send Burge for the ticket and a berth on the midnight."

Lights were burning in the Mullaly private sanctum that night when the tower clocks were tolling the hour of eleven. The Chief was nodding over his desk, an unlit cigar hanging loosely from the corner of his mouth, when Detective Mooney entered and laid his suitcase on the floor. Mullaly spat out the weed, arose and stepped to the detective's side.

"Tom, you're the only man on earth that can get that crook without any more bloodshed. Now go. Good luck, boy, and God bless you."

Clay Willok, the fugitive, was about twenty-five years old, and spent the major part of his life in the mountains, fishing, shooting and working as a "white-mule" carrier. He was an ungainly hulk, illiterate and semi-savage.

Even with these handicaps he had a sweetheart.

Caroline Hendricks seemingly reciprocated his attention until a handsome Federal agent came to town. His name was Richard Dunlap, and Caroline fell for the debonair Adonis. Her love for Willok waned like the moon, and soon Clay was planning vengeance on her new lover. But the town became too small for the new affinities, so one day they both stepped aboard a train bound for Boston and shook farewell to their mountain love-nest. Dunlap's conduct reached the Revenue Department at Washington, resulting in his summary dismissal.

Clay Willok, enraged at what he termed "a low-down trick," by borrowing, begging and stealing collected enough money, then went to the "Hub" in quest of his rival. Their meeting was a turbulent one. The ex-Federal agent being somewhat of a leather-pusher, Clay struck the earth so often that he finally resorted to the weapon of the hill-men—the revolver. Richard Dunlap went down for all time.

The mountaineer made good his escape, and in less than six months crept back to his home in the wilderness, where he was discovered and arrested. Caroline also returned home after her husband's death.

Less than a week before Chief Mullaly was apprised by wire of the arrest and the ill-fated Detectives Shine and Nolan had been detailed to bring him back to stand trial for murder.

The letter following the telegram said, in part, the two detectives and their prisoner were waiting at the station for the Eastern train to pull in. A crowd of natives had collected, and seemed friendly toward the killer by hurling epithets at the officers and words of encouragement to Willok. Their harassing and menaces reached such a stage that, fearing an attempt to liberate the prisoner, Detective Shine drew his revolver. It was then, and before Nolan could get his gun out, Willok, with a snarl of rage, slipped off a loose handcuff, snatched the revolver from Shine's hand and the next instant the two detectives were stretched out on the station platform seriously wounded.

PART TWO

AMIDST much puffing, snorting and whistling of airbrakes, the train bearing Mooney stopped at the little railroad station marked "Cooks County." On the platform Mooney looked down at the spot where his friends fell. His handsome face was not unlike a clay mask as he raised his eyes and his clenched hands and rigid arms bore out the intensity of his silent oath of revenge.

Mooney walked from the station and entered the town, then proceeded to the sheriff's office.

"How yo' gonna get that yer critter, Mr. Mooney, eh?" the leathery-faced old sheriff asked the detective after the customary formalities had closed. "Yo' kno' we uns have nothin' against Clay, an' I find it mighty hard t' take his stronghold by storm. There's a half-wit—Sage Tray's his name—that lives with a colored mammy in a shack on th' edge of Sodden Swamp. He's been a-comin' into town o' late an' buyin' provisions. We uns figgered that Clay was sendin' him here, as he allus has money. We tried t' trail him back, but he lost us in the cane-brake. He's a wise fool," chuckled the sheriff, "'cos when we sent dawgs after him darned if th' pesky critter didn't tie th' hounds t' a tree."

"How about the girl?" ventured the detective. "Would she help him, or aid us to get him?"

The sheriff filled, lit and smoked a blackened corncob pipe in silence before he answered:

"I can't say, suh; but I cal'late she is agin him 'cos he killed her man. Like t' see her?"

Mooney nodded. The sheriff unlimbered his rangey body from the chair and strode to the door. A few words with a native who was sprawling on the porch without, then he returned and slumped into his chair again.

An angry female was ushered in some ten minutes later. Unlike the other so-called swamp-women, she was not unkempt and dirty. Her face, olive and creamy brown, was topped by a wavy mass of

ebony-black hair. She stood still, mutely questioning.

"This is Detective Mooney from back East," drawled the sheriff, inclining his head toward the sleuth. "He wants t' have a word with yo', Caroline."

Mooney, smiling as he arose, advanced with extended hand. His gracious manner drew a mumbling "Howdy" from her as she reluctantly accepted his proffer of friendship.

"I'm here to capture and bring back Clay Willok, Caroline, and I'm going to ask your aid in doing so," said Mooney. "We've got the first claim on that guy, and then Cooks County can have what's left of him. We don't want to shed any more innocent blood, so I think if you'll coöperate with me we can land that guy. Are you game, or do you still love the man that shot your——"

"Love him!" she burst forth venomously. Her eyes were burning with the smoldering fire of hate as her breast rose and fell in turbulent emotion. "I hate him! Hate him! I'd kill him with my own hands, I would!"

And, running true to form, she burst into a torrent of tears.

The detective was silent until the floodgates were closed. Pent-up grief and harbored revenge spent their force with sobs and a heaving of shapely shoulders. Red-nosed and shame-faced, she looked up at him again through misty eyes, and for the next fifteen minutes conversation buzzed—Detective Mooney the orator and moving spirit, and the girl and the sheriff approving.

Mooney then put up at a forlorn country tavern and the girl went down the street.

" 'Lo, Sage," greeted Caroline. The salutation was addressed to a mis-shapened figure that was hopping, toad-like, toward her.

" 'Lo, Caroline," he returned in a cackling voice, his greenish eyes sweeping the surroundings and then resting on her smiling face admiringly.

"How's Clay?" she ventured.

"Don't know. Don't see um," he lied.

"Come now, Sage," she wheedled, placing her hand on his thin shoulders. "Yo' tell Clay that I ain't got no hard feelin' 'gainst him 'count of what he done. Tell him I want t' help him. Tell him that, Sage, won't you?"

Sage Tray blinked at her for an instant, then hopped off chuckling. Caroline watched the half-wit until he faded from view, then her teeth bared in a snarl.

"Yes, I'll help him—to go to jail!" she muttered.

Next day Sage made his appearance toward high noon. Caroline was feeding her rabbits in the front yard when he stopped before the gate.

" 'Lo, Caroline," he grinned. "Saw Clay. Tol' him what yo' sed. Reckoned he'd be yor man 'gain if you'd help um. Honest."

"Sure, Sage; I'll help him," she said, putting her bunnies back into their house.

"Goin' my way, Sage?" she asked as she came through the gate and started toward the town center.

The half-wit nodded and trailed behind.

The figure of Mooney was standing within earshot, but not in view, and he smiled as he turned into the woods.

"Fertile land; good seed and a little gray-matter to mature it will produce good results," he muttered. "The seed has taken root in the idiot's head, I'm thinking."

A few minutes later Postmaster Dave Cribbens was sorting over the noon mail when Caroline Hendricks and Sage Tray entered the store. Out of the tail of his eye the postmaster noted their entry. Several loungers were also hanging around, and Tim Samuels, Cribbens's helper, was serving a customer.

"Blamed if thar ain't a letter here fo' Clay Willok," he remarked casually and kept right on sorting.

The half-wit was all ears now, and in somewhat of a quandary. Paying for the few purchases he made, he hurried outside. Once there he beckoned to Caroline, who followed him to the road.

She listened while he repeated the postmaster's remark.

"Well, Sage," she said, seemingly interested, "I don't know what yo' can do about it. Yo' see, we uns can't get Clay's letter, 'cos it ain't regular. Yo' tell him I'll try to help him in secret, as I don't want the

Cooks County folks to know what I'm doin'. I'll ask Dave Cribbens to let me look at the envelope. Goo'by, Sage."

Next day just after sun-up the half-wit was draping himself over the rickety fence before Caroline's house. She greeted him as usual, also feeding him a generous piece of corn-cake and a mug of milk.

"Been here all night, Sage?" she jested.

"Nope," grinned the idiot, "just came from Clay. He's all het up 'bout that letter, 'cos he never had one afore. An', say, Caroline, Clay couldn't read that letter nohow, more than I can. Didya see Cribbens?"

"Sure," said the girl. "That letter's got the government name on the envelope. Must be sure important, Sage," she hinted with a knowing wink. She was following the detective's instructions now.

That same afternoon Caroline smiled as she watched Sage Tray hopping up the road toward where she sat at the window. She greeted him at the door and seated herself beside him on the top step.

"What brings you this way again today, Sage?" she asked.

"Clay says as how Cribbens was yo' beau once, an' how yo' could get th' letter an' tell me what it says."

Caroline was thoughtful for a moment, and then asked:

"Couldn't Dan Mead or Jude Stiles over in the Hollow read it for him? They're friends of Clay's—ain't they?"

The Meads, Stiles, and the Willoks were of the same clan, and the keen-witted girl was testing her ground before she tread on it.

"No—no, not now, Caroline," cried Sage. "While yo' an' yore husband were up North Sheriff Teel was a-snoopin' 'round after Linda Stiles, an' he's gonna marry her. Jude Stiles now says Clay Willok shouldn't have shot th' two Yankee constables. The Stiles set th' dwags on me when I asked them fo' some bacon the other day."

"So," smiled the girl as she arose. "Sit down here, Sage, and I'll be back soon."

The half-wit chuckled as he watched her pliant body swinging up the road. Beast-like, he worshiped Willok, the fugitive, but he also feared him and his knife and gun. The poor simpleton's throat bore many scratches which the keen point of Clay's knife had inflicted when impressing on him that death would be his punishment if he betrayed him.

The girl was heading for the town.

When she stood before the grill enclosure marked "Post Office," the postmaster beamed on her approvingly.

"Here it is," he smiled, handing her a sealed, plain envelope bearing Clay Willok's name.

The girl peered at the letter as she turned it over several times in her hand. The address was typewritten and postmarked Washington, D. C. No other marks were visible.

"Did Mr. Mooney see this letter?" she inquired.

"No," said the postmaster, squinting over his glasses. "I hailed him when he was passin' this mornin' an' tol' him it come. He said as how he'd be in on th' way back. Anythin' th' matter?"

Caroline shook her head and left the store.

Ten minutes later she was again seated on the top step with the half-wit. Tearing open the envelope, she gasped as she read the inclosed sheet.

"Lordy!" she ejaculated, then stopped. Sage had arisen and was staring down at her.

"What's matter?" he croaked. "Bad news?"

"Oh, no," she assured him. She folded the sheet and put it back into the envelope. She was thinking fast, and at last reached a decision.

"Now," she told him in a strained voice, "mind what I'm goin' to tell you, and don't stop until you reach Clay and tell him this."

All aglow, the half-wit listened as the girl poured into his ears a narrative that caused him to clap his hands with glee.

"Go along, now," she ordered, placing the letter in his grimy hand, "and if yo' meet any one don't let them see you. Goo'by."

The shadow of the advancing night was creeping over the land of cotton and out-

lawed bourbon as the detective and Sheriff Teel sat in the office of the Cooks County jail. In the cell-room, close at hand, were two deputies. Mooney was puffing on a big cigar and peering through slitted eyes out the window. He had just eased himself back in his chair to a more comfortable position when the door was thrown open and Clay Willok stalked into the room.

Sheriff Teel sat erect. Detective Mooney never shifted his gaze as Willok swept the room with a glance and brought his long-barreled gun to a ready when his eyes rested on the Headquarters man.

"Hello, Clay," greeted the sheriff, following the bad man's gaze. "This here stranger's a new doctor that's gonna hang out a shingle in town. I'm mighty glad t' see yo' a-comin' in this way—you're ready to surrender?"

"Surrender nothin'," sneered Clay, bringing the gun-butt down on the floor with a loud bang. "Yo' uns ain't gonna hang me fo' that killin' 'cos th' government say no. Read that."

With a dramatic flourish, he tossed the letter in the sheriff's lap.

The two deputies were now in the office, and, after nodding to the fugitive, seated themselves and seemingly forgot he existed.

Sheriff Teel drew forth the inclosed sheet with fingers that trembled slightly. Not from fear—far from it. That word was unknown to the Cooks County sheriff. As he opened it he could not suppress a gasp as he read the contents. Turning it over confusedly, he looked toward the detective. If Mooney saw the move he betrayed no sign of it.

"What's the matter?" growled Clay, taking a firm hold on his gun again. "Ain't that a pardon from th' government if I promise t' be good? Ain't it? Caroline Hendricks said so. If she lied t' me I'll——"

"Tut—tut, Clay," soothed Teel after he recovered his composure. "Sure it is. Kinda took my breath away, as I was so mighty glad. Yo' don't mind if I let Doc here look it over—do yo'?"

"No," consented Clay, relaxing from his belligerent attitude and laying on the sheriff's desk guns and ammunition enough to keep ten men at bay.

Detective Mooney took the letter from Teel's hand and studied it carefully. He did not gasp as did the sheriff, but a close observer would have noticed a slow expansion of his contracted eyelids. His mouth did likewise, causing his cigar to fall to the floor.

"Looks regular enough to me, sheriff," he drawled nonchalantly, "only I suppose there are a few little matters that have got to be attended to connected with it. I'll say Willok's a very fortunate young man."

He handed the letter back to the sheriff, then picked his cigar from the floor and resumed smoking.

"Yes, that's right, Doc," said the sheriff, rising and standing before Willok. "Yo' don't mind me lockin' yo' up for 'bout a half-hour, do yo', Clay? Yo' see, this here paper says t' have Judge Kline make yo' take an oath, and then yo' are to go free. An' you know, Clay, that th' folks 'round these parts don't understand till th' judge tells um all 'bout it. Yo' won't mind, will yo'?"

The sheriff was now standing between the killer and the desk, his hand hovering carelessly near his revolver-butt. His deputies were also balancing on their toes, their hands suspiciously near their firearms. Mooney had not moved an inch, but his eyes were blazing with suppressed excitement.

"Well, well, I suppose it's all right, sheriff," agreed Clay reluctantly, "but I don't see why I can't stay here."

"Suit yo'self, Clay," said Teel easily, a hard look in his gray eyes, his hand now fanning his gun-butt. "But yo' know if th' folks take it in their heads to hang yo' afore th' judge tells um that th' government let yo' go, yo' won't have no chance without yore guns. An' seein' that you're gonna be a mighty law-abiding citizen fo' th' rest of yore days, yo' ain't gonna use them no more."

"All right, sheriff; but hurry um along," he grinned. "Caroline Hendricks is gonna be my gal 'gain, an' I want t' call on her."

When the steel door clanged on the rascal

the sheriff almost rushed from the jail into the office. Detective Mooney and the deputies were gathered in a group and shaking with suppressed laughter. The old sheriff gave one look and joined in their mirth.

"Mr. Mooney, suh," he managed to gasp when the merriment had somewhat abated, "I can't make it out, suh. How the devil——"

"Well, sheriff," smiled the detective, "it's some joke. The fake letter I was expecting from the Federal Department at Washington seems to have been delayed, but that business agency must have got Clay's name out of the directory and sent him a circular. But it fooled him, as he can't read, for the girl made him think it was a pardon."

Caroline came in a moment after Mooney finished speaking.

"I reckon yo' uns got him all right," she chuckled. "I was peepin' through ther window. Reckon I'll get on ther detective force, Mr. Mooney."

"You decoyed him, all right," smiled the officer grimly, "and a pretty new dress is coming to you for your trouble. Clay will not shoot any more innocent men if I'm any judge of what the court is going to hand out to him. Let me read what Clay's letter said:

"'Professor Feline's Rat Exterminator. This wonderful discovery is guaranteed to lure from their lairs the germ-carrying rodent, the worst scourge of humanity that prowls the earth, and exterminate them. Sold by all the leading druggists in the United States. Price $1.00 per box. Feline Co., Washington, D. C.'"

A peal of laughter came from the girl's lips, and Mooney returned to her home with her. There he found Shine and Nolan nearly recovered from their wounds, thanks to Caroline's good care.

And when the three detectives went back to Chief Mullaly they had Clay Willok a fettered prisoner.

FIND ALLEGED SWINDLER

LOCAL authorities at Atlantic City moved to extradite "Australian Mack," a picturesque figure also known as John Mack and Edward Trent, according to the police, whose arrest in New York ended a fifteen months' search instituted by local police in an effort to apprehend the leader of what is said to be the most daring race-track gambling swindle ever attempted. Two alleged confederates of Mack are still being sought.

The specific charge against Mack is swindling Louis Benner, a merchant of 382 Grand street, New York, out of $20,000. Benner told the police he came to buy a quantity of whisky which a man he knew as Krouse told him he had stored in a warehouse on Arctic avenue. The pair had dinner in a beach front hotel. There the discovery of a pocketbook and its return to its apparently grateful owner served as a means of introducing Benner into a finely furnished house on Connecticut avenue, where the police said there was a poolroom.

After the usual winning of bets on sure things given him by the pocketbook owner, Benner was induced to bet $20,000. Before the bet was decided a fight broke out, Benner was "eased outside," and the door was locked. Realizing he had been swindled Benner ran to the police station, half a mile away, where he entered a complaint.

By the time a patrol wagon carrying policemen reached the Connecticut avenue address, the inmates of the place had taken all the gambling paraphernalia and left.

The Cage

By HAMILTON CRAIGIE

CHAPTER ONE

WITH his eye to the keyhole of the door, Officer Williamson froze suddenly in motion.

For, of a sudden, the room into which he gazed had sprung suddenly to light from darkness. He heard a harsh whisper, like a summons of doom:

"Well—we're all here. Now, Red, it's up to you."

The detective, his eye to that tiny keyhole, drew in his breath with a sudden, sharp, hissing inspiration. Detective Williamson was a brave man—none braver—but just now he was on a perilous case and none knew it better than he.

For the men at whom he gazed—Handsome Harry Iverson, "Graveyard" Schultz, Frisco Red Masterman—these three had sworn to get him, if they could. In their hangout on the third floor front of a disreputable tenement in the West Forties they were within arm's length, had they but known it, of the Nemesis who had hounded them many months in the highways and byways of Criminopolis. Failing their capture, the detective had harried the three from city to city in a stern chase which had balked them at every turn.

Now at last they had sought and found, as they had thought, a haven here in this backwater of the city's night life. But, just prior to their entry, the detective, with the aid of his pass-key, had preceded them, and between two ticks of the watch, as he heard them coming up the stairs, he had sought shelter behind that flimsy door.

The detective was not, as it happened, in another room; it was, in fact, just a closet, a cul-de-sac, and likely, as he realized upon the instant, to prove a trap.

And if the three, sitting there at the table, should suspect even for an instant that the man whom they hated with a bitter, brooding hate was but a hand's-breadth removed from them they would, as the detective but too well knew, give him short shrift.

It had been no part of the officer's plan to confront them single-handed, although he would not have hesitated even with odds of three to one to give them battle, if the occasion served.

He smiled grimly in the thick darkness as, his hand upon the door, he had given it a slow, steady pressure. Perhaps, after all, taking them by surprise, in one quick spring he could be upon them, with leveled gun. He had preferred to take them alive, but alone he knew that, desperate as they were, at the first sight of him they would open fire.

But nobody knew that he was there; he had picked up the fugitives' trail at nightfall in the dim purlieu hard by the waterfront; he had followed it to the mean flat in the West Forties, seen them go in and out, made entry, and it had been with his hand upon the wall phone that he had heard them coming up.

The three had rented the flat, furnished; the telephone was in another name—that much the detective had discovered, but it had availed him nothing. In two strides he lunged forward for that door, to find it—just a closet, a cul-de-sac, and a something more.

For, with his hand upon the doorknob, in a slow, stealthy pressure, all at once he had desisted, with a grim, tight-lipped smile.

For the door was locked. He was a prisoner.

CHAPTER TWO

A SPRING lock on the outside—that had done it. He was in a trap. He had been looking through a keyhole, indeed, but it was an old one; it had preceded the substitution of the lock.

And at any moment now the three on the other side—ruthless, implacable, with a cruel, cold cunning—at any moment might open that door.

Crouching there in the darkness, his automatic at the ready, the detective heard a voice; it snarled in the silence like a cat's:

"Well, now, Red—it's up to you."

That would be "Graveyard" Schultz.

"Well—how about a little snifter first?" answered the man called "Red." "That damn dick—what is it they call him? 'Special Confidential Employee'—sure. Well—he's followed us close, you guys; any minute now he's liable t' smoke us out."

Williamson heard on a sudden a scraping of chairs. Some one had arisen; he could hear the soft pad-pad of heavy steps approaching his hiding-place. He stiffened, then breathed deep as the steps receded; there came the brief clink of metal on metal, a muttered oath.

"Well, now, it's like this," came after a moment, a voice which the operative recognized as Red's. There followed a murmur of voices; the operative could distinguish only the words "plant" and "soup"; then, after a moment, the words, succinct and clear: "Thirteenth National."

They were planning a "touch," then. Plainly they felt themselves secure. But they were in need of funds. A flying touch, and they would be away.

"An even fifty grand apiece, and then, guys, we'll roll our hoop," said Red.

From the shelter of his cage the operative heard the burring mumble of voices even as, with the passage of a heavy truck in the street below, he felt the closet shake with the vibration of that heavy weight. And at the same instant that he felt and understood he heard, too late, the clinking rattle; his keys, dislodged from his pocket, had fallen, striking against the floor.

The sound had not been loud—with the roaring passage of the heavy truck not louder than a faint, fugitive tinkle. But the yeggmen in the room beyond had caught the noise, and upon the instant acted. Williamson heard a grating oath, the smashing slam of a heavy chair hurled backward to the floor, and, above the noises, the voice of Red:

"Somebody in there, you guys. I'm going to have a look."

And then, following this threat, the purring voice of Handsome Harry pitched, as always, a tone lower than Schultz's or Frisco Red's:

"Maybe so, but—hell—can't you see the door's locked. Take it easy, Red; you'd throw a cat-fit at your own shadow; easy does it, bo."

But Frisco Red, snarling, lip lifting like a trapped animal above his stained and broken teeth, made a sudden lunge toward the floor. He came up with the stub of a half-smoked cigarette in his fingers.

"It's *his!*" he roared, his brow darkly ominous. "F'r once th' damn dick stubbed his toe, and it'll kick him straight to hell. I tell you, Harry, he's behind that door; I *know* it. Now, if it brings every bull here for blocks on th' double-quick, I'm going to croak him, because I'll never have a better chance."

His hand came up and out, and the stuttering roar of his automatic crashed in the silence like the blows of a hammer upon that door, and the man who was behind it.

CHAPTER THREE

WITH the passage of that heavy truck which the operative had heard he understood his situation.

He was in a dumb-waiter.

Before the building was converted into a flathouse it had been designed for lofts, and the waiter itself was big, almost like an elevator. That was perhaps why the detective had failed to realize the nature of his cage. The new owners had simply knocked those lofts together into flats, leaving the dumb-waiters as they stood with

doors that opened flush with the flooring. They were strong doors, double- and triple-braced.

Therefore, at the first sound of the voice of Red, the operative, retrieving the keys, placed his hand upon the rope and heaved downward with all his strength. The waiter moved slowly and gathered momentum inch by groaning inch; then, even as that burst of bullets had crashed into and through the door, the elevator had shot upward.

And luck for once was with the detective. The top flat was untenanted. Bringing the heavy waiter to a slow, grinding stop, he had found the door open and swinging on its hinges.

Then, working with the fury of a desperate need, his hand upon that rope now run the ponderous car downward to the level of the floor below. He reached, then, into the shaft to knot the rope, double- and triple-clinched. Then taking the stairway at a plunging rush he approached the doorway to the flat, walking lightly on the tips of his toes. Then he chinned himself upward to the transom and gazed upon the three men in the room. Then he stifled a quick word in his throat.

It was too good to be true.

He heard the thick tones of Frisco Red:

"Well, boys, there's one dick less in Noo Yawk, as sure as Gawd made little apples. But we'll have a look."

The operative in the hall, dropping downward to the door, inserted his key in the lock; then opening it inch by inch he saw and exulted at the seeing; the crooks were going into the elevator.

He watched as Frisco, flinging wide the door, strode inward, behind him Schultz. But Handsome Harry Iverson, as if somehow he were aware of that which was to come, was holding back.

That much the detective saw in a fleeting second. He heard Frisco fumbling in the dense darkness, saw the head and shoulders of Schultz as the stout yegg prepared to follow, behind him the tall figure of Iverson, bent forward a little like a sprinter upon his mark.

That much he saw as, flinging wide the door, he catapulted inward at a plunging rush. Before Iverson could turn the operative's hand, palm outward, had struck him between the shoulders with a smacking thud and the tall yegg shot forward to join his comrades in the cage. The door slammed shut upon them with a hollow crash.

Caged!

The operative, leaning against the wall, laughed, as with the sound of curses, loud and deep, there came the slatting thunder of the rope.

But they might as well have tried to move a mountain; the rope was fast above—the operative had seen to that. And that heavy door, doubly and trebly braced, locked with its patent lock, scarred even as it was and splintered by the impact of the heavy slugs, would have withstood far more than the puny assault now launched against it with fist and foot.

Going to the wall phone, the detective called Headquarters; then his voice rang triumphant in the narrow room:

"Got 'em—th' whole kit-and-caboodle! Under lock and key. Now hurry with the wagon an we'll give 'em all a little ride!"

JAIL PRISONERS GET NARCOTICS

THE mystery as to how prisoners in Raymond street jail have been receiving dope has been solved.

With its solution is revealed the agonies from which the addicts suffer, the schemes they plan to outwit the authorities who forbid visitors to bring in narcotics. The method of delivery was discovered through George Billafer of the Narcotic Squad.

Friends of the drug addicts saturated letters with a solution of cocaine and allowed it to dry. Then the letters were addressed, not to the addicts themselves, but to other prisoners, who delivered the letters.

The addicts then placed the letters in water, heated them against the steam pipe that runs through the cells and dissolved the drug.

With Eyes and Nose

By RALPH E. DYAR

PART ONE

STILL dizzy from sleep, and disturbed by a nameless sense of apprehension which she could neither shake off nor explain, the housekeeper stepped nervously to the top of the stairs. From below an odor, unfamiliar and unpleasant, assailed her nostrils and added to her sense of vague uneasiness.

It was late. Already the sunlight of early forenoon was slanting through a southern window and breaking up the shadows in the dim hall, like the acid solution on a developing film.

Mr. Thornley must have left the house hours ago, she thought, as she hurried somewhat guiltily down the long flight of stairs, the sound of her footfalls deadened by the thick fabric of heavy carpeting. Again that strange, sickening, indefinable smell; what could it be?

Reaching the ground floor, she was on the point of turning toward the rear of the house when the crumpled rug at the library door caught her attention. Stooping to straighten it, her glance took in the room itself, and with a start she noted its wild disorder. Chairs were overturned, pictures awry, books and magazines flung here and there, a vast upset and broken, a small black satchel gaping and on its side, the safe door ajar, under the table the ponderous fireplace poker, and near it a man's prone body. It was a familiar figure to the housekeeper in its checked suit, the lionine head twisted to one side, the face bruised.

With a stifled shriek the horrified woman hurried out of the room and sank onto the stair landing, half sick and completely unnerved.

It was several minutes before she got herself sufficiently in hand to stagger to the telephone, search the directory with violently trembling fingers, and give a number.

"Mr. Kendall," she managed to say when the call was finally completed, "Mr. Thornley has been murdered!" Then she fainted.

The city editor of the *Star-Gazette* tried insistently to get further details from the informant who had given him the startling news, then replaced the receiver on the hook with an emphatic click, the only outward sign of the shock which the message had given him, and, turning to a reporter seated at an adjoining desk, repeated what he had just heard.

"I am sure it was the housekeeper," he said. "Go to the station quick as you can leg it there; report this call, and ride to the Thornley home with whomever the Chief sends.

"And get this, Best: See if they won't assign an officer to keep the public out of the house. There may be fingerprints or other evidence that visitors would destroy."

"I'll see what I can do," the reporter drawled. "I know a case in Memphis and another in Salt Lake where the crowds were let in and made it impossible to get a clue. Tell you what, I'll remind the Chief about that New Jersey mess. Anything else?"

"Cover the story," his superior directed crisply. "I don't have to draw a diagram for a man with your experience. Phone me when you get there. And now hurry, old man."

In less than a quarter-hour he knew that his admonition had been heeded. Best's excited voice came over the wire:

"Thornley's dead, all right; knocked out with the poker from his own library, and somebody got $29,000, which he drew out of

the Second National Friday afternoon to take to his mine at Southgate. And say, they're going to assign a man to keep the crowd out. Let you know later if there's any clue. Thornley sure put up one whale of a fight. Whoever did the job must be carrying some marks of the scrap."

When the reporter had hung up Kendall signaled the paper's operator and gave a number.

"Is this Mrs. Alice Revling?" he asked when the connection was given, and a dulcet voice informing him that it was, he described the tragedy briefly.

"I happen to know," he explained, "that Carol Thornley will reach the city this afternoon on her spring vacation. It would be too cruel to have her hear of her father's death from a stranger. You'll meet her at the train and take her to your own home? That's fine of you. The train's due in about an hour. Thank you very much."

An expression of relief came over Kendall's kindly face with its firm lips and penetrating gray eyes. The blow which the blithe and smiling Carol was to receive would be staggering at best, but Alice Revling's gentle sympathy would save the girl from an overwhelming shock.

Kendall pictured her as she had worked under him the summer before, eager for a career as a writer, accepting the drudgery of the newspaper office with a radiant good nature which rose superior to long car rides, dreary routine, contact with petty, rasping personalities, and the muggy heat of a poorly aired office.

His reflections did not check rapid, competent preparations on the editor's part for the issuance of an extra playing up skilfully the sensational details of the crime as pieced together from facts the editor had at his finger-tips, from scraps which this or that reporter dug up, and from dramatic bits which Clay Best phoned in from the Thornley home.

Later, Best himself, stirred out of his usual professional calm, hurried in with a mass of scribbled notes, raw ore which he proceeded at once to put through the smelter of his typewriter, from which came presently the pure, sparkling mineral of a well-written news story, crisp and thrilling. Kendall picked up sheet after sheet and read the vivid account swiftly, assessing each fact, each phrase.

"It was a careless bird who croaked him," Best exclaimed, looking up from his machine. "He got soot from the poker all over his right hand and left the marks in three or four places. They'll be awful easy to identify, too; there's a sort of hooked scar, half an inch long, on the ball of the thumb.

"And, say," he added, "I arrangerd to get a photoghaphic copy of those fingerprints. Thought you might want to run them in the paper. That was a stunt we used once when I was working on a sheet in Detroit."

"Splendid idea," Kendall assented.

"No telling but what it might help spot the murderer," Best went on. "We'll have 20,000 readers looking for some one with the telltale fingerprints. The way it looks now it wasn't a regular crook who killed Thornley. If it had been he'd have worn gloves."

"A good many men must have known Thornley kept large sums in his house," the editor agreed. "How'd he happen to have so much?"

"I was just getting to that," Best answered. "Seems that for nearly a year Thornley has had hard sledding in his business, and in order to keep his mine going he sold stock to a lot of the miners and gave them pretty gilt certificates in place of wages whenever they'd take 'em. You'd be surprised to know how many fell for it, too."

"Well, this week Thornley cashed in on some other interests and managed to scrape $29,000 together all told, and I gather he figured on not only meeting the payroll, but taking up those notes and buying back some of the stock he'd parted with. It's a ninety-mile drive to the mine, so he couldn't wait for the bank to open, but always drew the money the day before and kept it in a wall safe in his library. He'd never had any trouble before, but apparently some one got onto his program, waited for him to turn the combination, and then laid him low."

"I presume the police will send out copies of those fingerprints," the editor remarked.

"You're right they will," was the answer,

"If Thornley's assailant has ever served a stretch they'll certainly have his name and number in short order. But as I said before, it's a big 'If.'"

Kendall nodded his head in agreement, then reading on, he directed: "Cut that talk of affinity between Thornley and Mrs. Revling, Best. It's too clear that robbery, not jealousy, was the motive. Besides, we're not a scandal sheet."

"All right," the reporter acquiesced. "That's O. K. with me; only I've been on a number of sheets that wouldn't consider it news without that angle."

"Papers differ," the editor remarked dryly and turned away.

After his lunch in the trim bake-shop adjoining the newspaper office, Kendall dropped into police headquarters to look at a photographic enlargement of the murderer's fingerprints which the head of the identification bureau was developing, and he studied intently while the expert pointed out the distinguishing scar, ridges and bifurcations.

On the way back he stepped into the Second National, ostensibly to cash a check, but in reality to get a good look at the force of clerks and tellers, any one of whom might easily have been aware of the fact that Thornley had checked out a large sum of money the day before.

Was one of them the murderer? Or if not, an accessory who knew the guilty man and shared in his spoils?

Kendall gave each face a swift, scrutinizing glance, only to be reminded that one cannot judge from exteriors alone, since crime invariably wears a mask of anonymity.

After getting his cash, he stopped at the desk of Fairchild, the cashier, a rounded hulk of a man, with close-cropped mustache and a perpetual scowl. The green *Star-Gazette* extra was at the banker's elbow, and he tapped it with a carefully manicured finger-tip.

"I warned Thornley that he was taking chances," he growled. "But he was a man who didn't know what fear or caution was. Used to be a sheriff in the old days in Montana. Keeping twenty-odd thousand in his home and transporting it over ninety miles of lonely mountain road didn't appeal to him as being risky at all. Now others will pay for his folly, and pay cruelly."

"You mean the loss of the money will cripple the mine?" Kendall inquired.

"More than that," the banker insisted, "though you understand I'm speaking to you as a friend of the family, and not for publication. I'm afraid it will result in the loss of the mine itself. Thornley owed a pile of money to Peter Cushner, the building contractor; and since Thornley was doing business on a terribly narrow margin, Cushner is more than likely to get control, as I have reason to know he is eager to do." He sat back in his chair lugubriously and gave his head a mournful shake, then started to make another remark, but broke off abruptly. Turning, Kendall saw the reason. Cushner himself had entered the bank and was making out a check at the glass-topped desk. Kendall nodded and paused after strolling near the contractor, who was cursing under his breath as he used a deposit slip to wipe the stains left on his fingers by an inky pen.

Almost without volition the editor noted the broad, stubby imprint of Cushner's forefinger and thumb where they had come in contact with the white surface, and observed several differences from the pattern he had just examined at Headquarters.

"Goes to show," he reflected, "how good an idea it is to run those prints in the paper."

Rather cast down by the banker's pessimism, he returned to his office to find Best putting the final touches on the story of the murder.

"I wish you'd run up with me to the Thornley home when we get through this afternoon," he requested. "I'd like to give the place the once over."

"Suits me," agreed the reporter. "In my hurry this morning I might have overlooked a few bets."

An hour or so later proofs of Best's story were brought in from the composing room. There were corrections to be made; names to be changed. Kendall observed that Best's right thumb was pressed against the wet

ink, and grinned amusedly when its mark was registered neatly on the sheet.

"Careful, old-timer, or you'll give yourself away," he joked, aware that, as with Cushner, he had automatically noted the individual characteristics of the imprints.

David Kendall was familiar with the big-windowed, rambling Thornley residence; but that evening as he and Best approached the house gave him a feeling of desolation, and there was something depressing in the knots of watchers on the sidewalks staring morbidly at the windows. In the street near the curb the newspapermen noticed a shabby, mud-spattered car and the broad back of a stalwart man tinkering with the engine.

A blue-coated policeman stood on guard at the front door of the house, but this official was acquainted with the newcomers and nodded affably as they strode up.

"The housekeeper's inside," he informed them. "She's staying with a friend, but came back to get some of her things."

Almost before he had finished speaking the front door swung inward and the housekeeper herself staggered out breathlessly and dropped a heavy suit-case onto the porch floor. Her natural pallor, in evidence that morning, had been covered with generous daubs of rouge, the paint and scanty black hair, bobbed short, bespeaking a pitiful, painstaking effort to look girlish in spite of the grim handicap of years.

At the sight of the editor the woman's face lit up.

"I'm glad to see you, Mr. Kendall," she exclaimed. "This morning I felt that you were the best person to notify."

"You're feeling all right again?" he asked kindly.

"Oh, yes," she answered. "I came to in a few minutes."

"I understand you heard nothing of the struggle," he remarked, looking at her with a quick, intent glance which protographed her expression on his brain.

"No, and the more's the pity," she answered. "My room is in the opposite corner of the house on the third floor, and I'm an awful sound sleeper."

"I imagine you told Best and the officers everything you know about the case," he ventured.

"I guess so," she replied. "I don't think you'll notice that smell any more. I aired things out good."

"What was it like?" the editor asked with kindling interest; "a drug, perhaps, like chloroform or ether?"

"No, it wasn't a drug, nor gas, either," the woman affirmed. "More like something burning, but I hain't got the flow of language to describe it."

"Even if you had," the policeman remarked, "it ain't likely it would solve the murder."

"I was thinking the robber might have intended using a drug to put Thornley to sleep," explained Kendall.

"I guess Thornley burnt some rubbish in the fireplace when he first got up," the housekeeper suggested.

"I wonder," she added, "if they've found the man who visited Mr. Thornley this morning."

"He had a visitor?" Kendall asked sharply.

"The dining-room table was set for two," she informed him.

"Did he say anything to you about having an early morning guest?"

"No," was the reply, "but that don't mean anything. He was queer that way. Used to cooking his own meals on the plains, and when he started early he preferred to make his own breakfast. Anyhow, he said nothing to me last night. Besides that, both the front and back doors were unbolted when I came down, though I was sure they was fastened before I went to bed."

Having imparted this information and watched with relish the perplexed expressions on the faces of her listeners, she turned toward the street, and, giving a kittenish wave of her handkerchief, cried: "Homer, my suit-case."

At this hail the stalwart young man at the machine shut down the hood of his car and came up the walk, a bashful grin spreading over his ruddy, vacuous face.

He mounted the steps hesitatingly, seeming to feel the prominence of his hands, and made as if to seize the suit-case.

"Wait a minute," the housekeeper directed, and introduced Kendall.

"Excuse me from shaking how-de-do," apologized the young man. "My hands are greasy," and backing away, he grabbed hold of the porch railing in an embarrassed grip.

He seemed relieved a moment later when his elderly companion whispered that he might go.

Kendall looked after the oddly assorted couple with an amused grin.

"Lovers, should you say?" he asked.

"Sure; she's got him hooked," the policeman answered, as the car swerved into the street.

Just then Best gave an exclamation.

"Look here," he said, pointing at the porch railing, "that young calf left his fingerprints here as neatly as if they'd been made to order."

Kendall and the officer examined the marks.

"That lets him out," the latter decided. "They're nothing like the prints in there."

"No, they're not," Kendall agreed, "and it's a good thing for him he left them. Nothing would be more likely than the housekeeper telling her sweetheart about Thornley's Saturday trips."

"Struck me his leaving his mark might be intentional," Best suggested.

"If it was," Kendall submitted, "it was cleverly done. Come, Clay, let's go in."

"Nothing's been changed or taken away—except the dead body," the policeman volunteered, as the newspapermen turned toward the door and cautioned: "I trust you boys not to disturb anything."

Kendall and Best moved directly to the library. The reporter apparently regarding the visit with professional apathy, pushed ahead unemotionally and switched on the lights, as it had grown dark inside; but the editor could not restrain a shrinking of the flesh. He had been in that spacious room when Thornley himself had spread his legs toward the blazing hearth, while Carol perched on the broad arm of his rocker and rumpled his long, thick, iron-gray hair affectionately.

"That's where the body was found?" Kendall asked, pointing to a dark reddish stain to which a clotted substance clung in spots.

Best nodded confirmation. He was wandering about the room, peering under furniture and peeping into dark corners. Abruptly he gave a shout.

"Look!" he exclaimed, and pointed at a small crumpled object between the wall and the massive leg of the grand piano.

"It's a glove," Kendall cried, "the murderer's glove wrenched off in the fight. Call the officer, will you?"

"No need," remarked the policeman from the doorway. "I heard the noise you fellows was making, and thought I'd see what was up." He approached the center of interest curiously and lifted the glove with gingerly care. The newspapermen pressed against him, and all three read the small, neat retailer's label sewn inconspicuously in the wrist band: "Ransom Bros., St. P."

"I was mistaken," Best admitted. "It was a professional after all."

"You mean the criminal actually wore the gloves and had them torn off in the fight?" Kendall queried.

"Doesn't it seem likely?—and that he wasn't able to find the glove afterwards?" the reporter answered.

"Doesn't prove he was a professional, though," remarked the policeman. "There are plenty of respected citizens that know that fingerprints are dangerous."

"Not overlooking the fact," Kendall contributed, "that the robber may have been working for some one higher up."

"Anyhow, it's for me to report this find to the Chief," the policeman concluded. "I'm thinking he'll wire the identification bureaus in the twin cities. They'll get a copy of them fingerprints by mail, anyway, but this will hurry things up."

"You think that's St. Paul and not St. Petersburg," Kendall asked.

"Sure, it's St. Paul," affirmed the officer. "Didn't I always buy my gloves from Ransom Brothers when I was on the force back there." He hurried to the telephone in the hall.

The editor picked his way carefully about

the littered room, observing more and feeling more than his speech or demeanor indicated. He spent several minutes inspecting both sides of the library door, and something which he saw on the varnish quickened his heart-beat. He called Best and pointed to some faint impressions near the edge.

"The robber's fingerprints, aren't they?" he asked, conviction in his tones.

The reporter looked closely.

"That's what," he agreed. "A light impression, but clear enough when the lights are on. The officers overlooked these particular prints this morning."

"I suppose that doesn't matter," Kendall commented. "They found the ones on the door-knob and window-sill."

A moment later he pointed to a whitish mark on a rug near the hall.

"What do you make of that?" he asked. "I've noticed several spots like it."

"Ashes tracked from the fireplace, most likely," his companion ventured. "You can see that Thornley had a fire in the grate either last night or this morning."

"Guess you're right," agreed the editor, poking at the débris beneath the andirons. "A big one, too; but these nights are chilly." He sniffed, and then turned away as if from a disagreeable odor.

(Concluded in our next issue.)

THE METHODS OF SCOTLAND YARD

A RETIRED director of Scotland Yard, the greatest criminologist in the world, was discussing a double murder in New York.

He said the crime would have received different treatment had it come under the attention of Scotland Yard.

The ground at the scene of the murder would have been roped off and touched only by trained men, he said. Then the bodies would have been turned over to medical examiners and an autopsy performed. In the solution of crime these two points are next in importance to finding the motive.

He next discussed the famous London detective bureau. He assured the writer that in no circumstances did they resort to third degree methods. The prisoner is carefully questioned after an arrest and the men on the case immediately go out and through their own efforts investigate and gather the facts. It is on their findings that the case goes to trial.

He remembered only one case of the unwritten law, and that was the slaying of a man, who, posing as a Count, wormed his way into the friendship of the wife of a British officer who was at the front. The officer returned, killed him, but was freed on the ground that it was justifiable homicide.

In England, he added, there were between eighteen and twenty-four murders each year and of that number four or five went unsolved. In listing these crimes he did not consider infanticide.

"There seems to me," the criminologist volunteered, "to be a great deal of 'free shooting in America, much more than in the United Kingdom. Over there we have a law that is similar to your Sullivan law, but it is drastically enforced. When a man is taken into custody and it is found that he is armed without a permit he is generally given a sentence that carries with it a long term in prison."

Asked about cases where the prisoner pleads insanity in extenuation of a crime, he said that if it was believed a prisoner was insane he was put in jail without the option of bail and there examined by two reputable alienists. When the case goes to trial, whether the man is insane or not depends entirely upon the testimony of the two physicians.

Traps for the Unwary

By POLICE CAPTAIN HOWARD

IN a recent interview with a veteran detective, he said to the writer:

It is a common boast of professional swindlers that they can fool a smart city dweller a great deal easier than a countryman. Their motto is that there's a fool born every minute for their special benefit. Swindling schemes have been practiced since the days of King Solomon, and none of the ancient games have been abandoned, although many have been worn threadbare from hard usage. New traps for the unwary have, of course, come into vogue, but they are seldom as successful as the old games. Strange as it may seem, there are such gullible people in the world that the Brooklyn Bridge could be sold to different innocents. Not long ago the Grand Central Terminal was handed to a trusting restaurant keeper for the sum of $1,200, but up to the present moment he has been unable to get a genuine deed. So the trusting boob has at last given up all hope of ever seeing his coin again. He was a smart enough man in some ways, had been in business a great many years, and was sharp enough at driving a bargain. Yet he fell like a ton of coal for a slick confidence sharp's smooth line of selling talk. When he complained to the authorities, he explained that he had gone to the Terminal Building with the swindler and made a careful and painstaking examination of the premises, the sheds and the trains, and had been introduced to an alleged official of the road who was, of course, the crook's pal, to whom he handed the money.

"There's $1,200," said he, "on account."

"What's that!" indignantly demanded the other, grabbing the roll of bills. "Only twelve hundred dollars, when the price is two thousand?"

"I know it's a bargain," admitted the cagy business man, "so we will not quibble about it; that's all the money I have with me. Wait here till I come back, and I'll fetch the other eight hundred."

With that he raced away, followed by the advice to hurry.

When he returned the sharpers were gone, and so was his money. A kindly policeman noticed his agitation, and asked what ailed him.

When he had explained the situation there was a broad grin on the cop's ruddy face, and he exclaimed:

"Gee! An' you a New Yorker! Better go down to headquarters and tell them about it. I guess they'll advise you to get a caretaker."

Now, a study of this case presents some queer psyschological features that are hard to explain. Here we have an intelligent business man, up to all the tricks of his trade, with a general knowledge of the games played by sharpers, and yet he was such a stupendous fool that he imagined he could buy one of the finest structures in New York for the paltry sum of two thousand dollars. He actually seemed oblivious of the fact that it was a great public utility, governed by the millions of the richest men in the world. The utter absurdity of his transaction never seemed to dawn upon his mind. The latter view seems to indicate that he was hypnotized, for no man in possession of ordinary common sense would do what he did.

A more petty case was recently pulled off near the corner of West 23d street and 7th avenue. A street faker sold a business man a pair of toy fighting roosters for 25 cents, received a twenty-dollar bill in payment, and pretended to have no change.

"Hold these," said he, handing his customer his stock of half a dozen toy roosters, "and I'll get change in that building opposite."

He entered the hall door, left his victim standing beside it, and the customer patiently waited. He might have been waiting yet if he had not lost patience. Going in, he mounted a flight of stairs, followed the L-shaped upper hall, and came out on 7th avenue. A canvass of the offices failed to show that the faker had gone into any of them, and the victim departed, a sad but wiser man.

These crooks are constantly studying methods of victimizing their prey and take advantage of every minute event to capitalize their shrewness. They always pit their wits against men, whom they figure to be just one peg less shrewd than themselves. The range of their activities is remarkable. Some have donned soldier clothes, and solicit subscriptions for fake magazines; others collect signatures for alleged bonus appeals and incidentally a few coins to carry on the work, while others have preyed upon churches and hospitals as self-styled heros suffering from the results of World War battles.

There is a case on record of a youth who beat his way across the continent posing as an amnesia victim, and leaving a trail of victims behind him. This clever swindler's method of procedure was simple enough. Clad in soldier clothes, he would go to a hospital and tell the doctors he did not remember who he was, claimed his head hurt, and said he was shell-shocked in the war. They naturally took him in, put him to bed, and the skilled physicians who examined the crook pronounced him neurotic, and probably a victim of amnesia. After several days in a hospital cot his case usually got in the newspapers, and the reporters got a pathetic story about his services in the aviation or ambulance divisions in France, and the wonderful work he did which ended in his present plight. This fable of course attracted the attention of women of means with generous hearts, who rushed to see him and showered him with gifts of money. When he figured he had cleaned up all he was likely to get, he would quietly disappear and bob up in a distant city with a similar harrowing tale. The worst offender of this type was recently brought to justice by an enterprising newspaper reporter in the following manner:

Some snapshots were taken of the suffering hero, and one of them found its way to a newspaper office, to be published with an article about the man. The editor wanted more details, and called in a bright young reporter and handed him the photograph with his instructions.

"Go up to Connecticut and interview the soldier," said the editor.

The reporter had occasion to stop at police headquarters before going, and chanced to show the photograph to an official.

"That fellow has a police record," said the officer after one look at the portrait. "His picture is in the Rogue's Gallery."

A comparison of the two pictures verified the officer's claim, and scenting a good story, the reporter headed for Connecticut, gaining permission to question the suspect. The reporter, who had been in the war, quizzed him about various battles, and got accurate answers, which plainly indicated that the man had been in the scrap overseas. He had a remarkable knowledge of the French battle points, and seemed to be an innocent and honest amnesia victim, as his loss of memory only began when he was gassed. In fact, he showed the reporter a service button received for being wounded at the time he was discharged from the army.

"This button is a fake," said the reporter, "and here is your police record, taken from the files at headquarters."

A Connecticut policeman accompanied the reporter, and as the startled swindler sprang from the cot to escape the officer grabbed him. Then he broke down and confessed. Among his various operations he admitted that he had jumped his hospital bills, got money from sympathizers and had stolen large sums along his route.

He, of course, went to prison, and the people he imposed upon learned the facts and kicked themselves for their generosity. Society was thus relieved of a mean menace, for such men make charitably disposed people fear that every deserving case that

comes to their notice is a humbug, and prevents them from doing good for men who who really need help.

"Not long ago," the detective went on reminiscently, "a fellow calling himself a discharged German sailor began to operate in New York a short time after Doctor Lorenz went back to Germany. His game was to impersonate the justly celebrated German doctor, and as he understood a few rudiments of osteopathy, he spread the news in the poorer quarters of the city that he was Lorenz, and was prepared to cure cripples of their deformities. The scoundrel had a very distinguished appearance that helped him to fool the unfortunates he victimized. He had cleaned up several hundred dollars, leaving his victims as badly off as they were before, when he chanced to be called in by a policeman's wife to doctor her child. Her husband happened to be the officer who had been detailed to one of Lorenz's clinics, and he knew the great osteopath by sight. When he saw the swindler posing as Lorenz, he realized that an imposition was being practiced and promptly arrested the sailor. As a result of his contemptible rascality the crook is now serving a maximum sentence.

"Every once in a while New Yorkers are excited by reading that precious minerals have been found in the highlands bordering the Hudson River. The latest of these so-called prospects was reported at Yonkers in 1922, where an alleged gold vein was unearthed. The swindling gang gave out reports that not only gold, but platinum, silver and other minerals were to be mined in the Nepperhan Park section of Yonkers. The ground had been carefully 'salted' by the crooks; that is, they buried traces of the ores they said they would mine, and let a number of gullible people see them dig some of it up, knowing the verification of their claim would spread like wildfire. Then they formed a stock company, issued a lot of beautifully engraved certificates, and started angling for suckers. There was a wild scramble to buy the stock. Conservative business men plunged thousands of dollars into the wild-cat scheme, and the swindlers raked in a large fortune within a few days. One of the investors, however, was more cautious than the rest. He was from Missouri, and wanted to be shown what his money was invested in. So he went to the company's office and demanded the right of witnessing the miners digging gold out of the earth. Of course the crooks tried to stall him off, but he was insistent, and as they did not want him to expose their reluctance to show the mine to one of its heaviest stockholders, they discreetly assented. An appointment was made for the next day, and the gentleman reached the alleged gold mine, was handed a spade, and was told to dig up a shovelful at a certain spot. He did so, and unearthed a gold collar button which had not melted with the old jewelry the crooks had melted up to salt the mine.

"Being a sharp man, he instantly realized what had been done, but did not betray his knowledge until he laid it before the police. They in turn arrested the miners and their backers, and the Yonkers gold rush of 1922 blew up like a burst balloon.

"The accident fakers are among the worst pests in the world for not only private individuals, but insurance companies as well," the detective went on. "A few years ago a bunch of these freaks banded together to clean up the whole country. They were men who could feign half idiocy. Some could throw an arm, hand, leg or foot out of joint at will, and others had cuts and sores all over them. Their graft was to throw themselves in the way of a locomotive, automobile or trolley car in such a manner that they were not really hurt, then claim serious injuries and bring suits for damages.

"Another type of swindler is the young fellow with agreeable manners who works the college alumni trick. By carefully reading college year-books and alumni records in public libraries, they familiarize themselves with the inmates of certain schools. Their first move is to go to the college, claim to be a graduate of another institute, and say they had their pockets picked. The members of the college alumni become interested in him, and when he gives them a touch for a few hundred dollars, a collection is taken up and he usually gets away with the loan. The fraternal feeling in students is what prompts them to help the

swindler. Another form of this trick is played when college students give shows. The crook arms himself with the names of the students in the cast, finds out the addresses of their parents, and goes there to make a call. Here he introduces himself as a classmate of their son, explains that he is on his way home and lost his money, and borrows enough carfare from each parent to make up a tidy sum before he vanishes.

"Recently a man found a buyer for two dozen bottles of rye at fifty dollars a dozen, and delivered it in a sealed package, but when the buyer tried to get the rye out of the bottles, it still had the husks on it. As the swindler had not mentioned liquor, he was within the law after a fashion and escaped prosecution. Of course, if the post-office were used to further a deception of this kind, the Federal authorities would make short work of the swindlers.

"The ancient gag of collecting funds for a political outing has often paid well, until the general public got wise to the game and promptly turned a deaf ear to the suave solicitor. When this old bunco game was in the height of its popularity we fell for it easily, as most of our citizens are proud to admit they have a political pull when such a pull becomes necessary, and figure that a short-cut to intimacy with a politician is by helping him in his personal enterprises.

"The lost and found advertisements have been a lucrative field for the ubiquitous cheat. For example, when an unlucky loser advertises a lost article, he usually gives a pretty accurate description of it, and there is where the crook steps in. He gets a cheap imitation of the lost jewel, which sometimes passes muster for the missing article, gets a reward, and disappears. In some instances the article has really been found, but fake stones are substituted for the genuine. In one case a pocketbook was returned to the owner in which there had been several banknotes of very high denomination. The owner cheerfully handed the finder $200 reward and thanked the crook profusely. But when he drew out the bills to count them, after the swindler's departure, he found the bills were counterfeits. He was thus out his original loss plus two hundred dollars.

"A swindler," the detective continued, "is generally encouraged by his first success, but sooner or later he is sure to make a false step and is trapped by the police. The only misfortune about apprehending them is that such men generally squander their ill-gotten gains very rapidly, and a loser seldom regains his money, and can only get satisfaction by punishing him. Of course the imprisonment of such a crook is a good thing for the community, as it prevents the fraud from preying upon other innocent people. City, State and Federal authorities are constantly on the alert for these crooks, and promptly put them out of business when they are caught. But they crop up constantly, for men who have been honest all their lives sometimes become swindlers while under the influence of a sudden impulse, or when tempted to acquire wealth by crooked schemes that enter their minds and make them think they can get away with it."

SECRET SERVICE WARNS OF COUNTERFEIT

TWO new counterfeit Federal Reserve notes are in circulation.

One is a five dollar note on the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, described as bearing "check letter D, face plate No. 1081; A. W. Mellon, Secretary of the Treasury; Frank White, Treasurer of the U. S.; portrait of Lincoln.

The other is a ten dollar note on the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, Va., "check letter D, face plate No. omitted; D. F. Houston, Secretary of the Treasury; John Burke, Treasurer of the U. S.; portrait of Jackson." Both counterfeits are poorly executed and should be readily detected.

MYSTERY MAGAZINE

The feature stories already published in this magazine are worth reading. The following are the titles of the novelettes contained in the numbers already printed.

96 "At Moriarity's," by Fred S. Shuey.
97 "The Lost Star of the Films," by Jack Bechdolt.
98 "Counterfeit Clues," by Chas. F. Oursler.
99 "The Cross," by W. S. Ingram.
100 "The Secret Service Mystery," by Hamilton Craigie and Elliot Balestier.
101 "A Crimson Price," by Elliott Lester.
102 "The Inspector's Strange Case," by G. Jacoba.
103 "A Museum Mystery," by Jack Bechdolt.
104 "The Little Red Book," by J. Alexander Young.
105 "A Man from Siam," by Chas. F. Oursler.
106 "The Clue of the Emerald Ring," by B. Poynter.
107 "Hell's Hinges," by Hamilton Craigie.
108 "The Wolf," by Katherine Stagg.
109 "The Brass Button," by Jack Bechdolt.
110 "A Whispering Mummy," by Chas. F. Oursler.
111 "Trapping the Jewel Smugglers," by B. Poynter.
112 "The Missing Evidence," by Harold F. Podhaski.
113 "A Clue by Radio," by Capt. Jack Static.
114 "The District Attorney's Secret," by C. Oursler.
115 "A Man From Headquarters," by H. Craigie.
116 "The Girl in the Case," by Carl Glick.
117 "A Scientific Detective," by D. G. McDonald.
118 "Number Nine Queer Street," by Jack Bechdolt.
119 "Trailed by a Private Detective," by Gottlieb Jacobs.
120 "The Mouse Trap," by Edith Sessions Tupper.
121 "A Radio Mystery," by Capt. Jack Static
122 "The Clawing Death," by Beulah Poynter.
123 "A Master of Millions," by Chas. Fulton Oursler
124 "The Secret of Room 13," by Hamilton Craigie.
125 "Six Months to Live," by George Bronson-Howard.
126 "Seals of Wax," by Jack Bechdolt.
127 "When Crooks Conspire," by Harold F. Podhaski.
128 "The Mystery of the Blue Car," by H. Craigie
129 "The Detective and the Law," by Frederick F Shuey.
130 "The Hand in the Dark," by Chas. F. Oursler.
131 "The Trail of a Rogue," by George Bronson-Howard.
132 "The Woman from Nowhere," by Jack Bechdolt
133 "The Time Detective," by Frank Blighton.
134 "The Whispering-Room," by Frederick C. Davis.
135 "One Clue Missing," by Chas. F. Oursler.
136 "The Doom of the Damned," by Joe Burke.
137 "The Consuming Death," by Gilbert Hammond.
138 "Mrs. Deane's Jewels," by Beatrice S. Luisi.
139 "The Brass Voice," by Jack Bechdolt.
140 "For Shame," by Wm. Hamilton Osborne.
141 "The Triple Cross," by Hamilton Craigie.
142 "Blood Rubies," by J. Werner Phelps.
143 "I'll Win! I'll Win!" by Arthur B. Reeve and Margaret W. Reeve.
144 "Phantom Fingers," by George Bronson-Howard.
145 "On the Yellows," by Frank Blighton.
146 "The Argentine Ruby," by Beulah and Shirley Poynter.
147 "The Barrington Arms Case," by Jack Bechdolt.
148 "Hounded," by Frank Blighton.
149 "Direct Action," by Dr. Harry Enton.
150 "The Footprints On the Ceiling," by Chas. Fulton Oursler.
151 "The One Chance," by Thomas Ripley.
152 "Weapons of Hate," by Eric Howard.
153 "In Reserve," by Frank Blighton.
154 "The House on the Rocks," by Jack Bechdolt.

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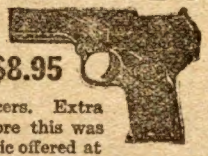

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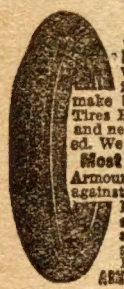

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Finding "The Fountain of Youth"

A Long-Sought Secret, Vital to Happiness, Has Been Discovered.

By Walter S. Dean

Alas! that spring should vanish with the rose!
That youth's sweet-scented manuscript should close!
—OMAR KHAYYAM.

A SECRET vital to human happiness has been discovered. An answer to an ancient problem which, sooner or later, affects the welfare of virtually every man and woman. As this problem undoubtedly will come to you eventually, if it has not come already, I urge you to read this article carefully. It may give you information of a value beyond all price.

This newly-revealed secret is not a new "philosophy" nor a financial formula. It is not a political panacea. It has to do with something of far greater moment to the individual—human happiness, especially in the later years of life. And there is nothing theoretical, imaginative or fantastic about it, because it comes from the coldly exact realms of the practical where values must be proved. It "works." And because it does work—most delightfully—it is one of the most important discoveries made in years. Thousands already bless it for having rescued them from disappointment and misery. Millions will rejoice because of it in years to come.

The peculiar value of this discovery is in its virtue for lifting the physical handicaps resulting from the premature waning of the vital forces of life, whether due to overwork, over-worry, sickness or the general over-expenditure of nervous energy in the strenuous living typical of the modern day. True happiness does not depend on wealth, position or fame. Primarily, it is a matter of health. Not the inefficient, "half-alive" condition which ordinarily passes as "health," but the abundant, vibrant, magnetic vitality of superb manhood and womanhood.

Unfortunately, this kind of health is rare. Our civilization, with its wear and tear, rapidly depletes

recuperative capacity, and, in a physical sense, old age comes on when life should be at its prime.

But this is not a tragedy of our era alone. Ages ago a Persian poet, in the world's most melodious epic of pessimism, voiced humanity's immemorial complaint that "spring should vanish with the rose" and the song of summer too soon come to an end. And for centuries before Omar Khayyam wrote his immortal verse, science had searched—and in the centuries that have passed since then has continued to search, without halt, for the fabled "fountain of youth"—the means for renewing energy and extending the summer time of life.

Now, after many years of research, joyful reports from thousands show that lives clouded by the haze of too early autumn have been illumined by the summer sun of health and joy; old age, in a sense being kept at bay, and the physical and mental vigor of former years again enjoyed in work and recreation. And the discovery which so adds to the joy of living is easily available to every one who feels the need of greater energy and vitality.

The discovery had its origin in famous European laboratories. Brought to America, it was developed into a product that has won the highest praise in thousands of cases, many of which had defied all other treatments. In scientific circles the discovery has been known and used for several years with extraordinary gratifying appreciation for the success it has demonstrated. It is now put up in convenient tablet form, under the name of Korex compound, for distribution to the general public.

Anyone who finds life losing its charm and color or the feebleness of old age coming on years too soon, can obtain full strength treatment of this compound, sufficient for ordinary cases, under a positive guarantee that it costs nothing if it fails to prove satisfactory and only $2 if satisfied. In average cases, the compound usually brings about gratifying improvement in a few days.

Simply write in confidence to the Melton Laboratories, 2178 Melton Bldg., Kansas City, Mo., and this wonder restorative will be mailed to you, sealed in a plain wrapper. You may enclose $2 or, if you prefer, just send your name without money and pay the postman $2 and parcel is delivered. In either ... report within ten days that you are not satisfied, the purchase price will be refunded ... Laboratories are nationally ... reliable. Moreover, their ... no one need hesitate to ... this widely praised and rema... write for it today.

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